

UNITED STATES NAVY

# SEABEE

SUMMER 2009

MARITIME STRATEGY AT WORK: NMCB 11 IN THE

## HORN OF AFRICA

ALSO INSIDE:

**CEC Officer  
Killed in Iraq**

Stethem, Combs, Shields, Moreell, Peltier and Perry  
**Awards Announced**

Heritage: Vietnam-Era  
**NMCB 4 'Bees  
Construct Liberty Bridge**



**WE BUILD ★ WE FIGHT**



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WINNER OF 2008 AND 2009



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### FINAL WORD

On their first deployment with NMCB 11, four members share stories and experiences from the newest chapter in the battalion's history.



### ON THE COVER

Seabees from NMCB 11 Detachment Horn of Africa – (front to back) BU2(SCW) Peter Belcastro, BU3 Carolyn Wade and BU3(SCW) Patrick McKinney – remove framework during construction of the Walela low-water crossing bridge, Aromo, Uganda, April 18. NMCB 11 is deployed for the first time since being re-established in 2007, and is providing mission support in the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa area of operations.

Photo by MC2 Erick S. Holmes  
Photo illustration

*"Theater Security Cooperation [Programs] remain the cornerstone of our persistent, sustained engagement. These programs build lasting relationships, promote common interests, and enhance partner capabilities to provide safe and secure environments... Our cooperative security efforts provide essential peacetime and contingency access and infrastructure, improve information sharing, and are vital to U.S. Africa Command's support of U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives."*

Gen. William E. Ward, Commander, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Africa Command Posture Statement 2009

Almost two years ago, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 was commissioned for the third time at Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss., on Sept. 14. After many months of training in the homeport phase, NMCB 11 is now supporting efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as Theater Security Cooperation Programs in the Pacific and Horn of Africa. In this issue, we take a closer look at how the battalion is building hope for the people of Africa. *Final Word* also provides a personal glimpse from four battalion members on their experiences with the "new" ELEVEN.

This year's recipients of three of the most prestigious honors presented in the Builder Warrior community – the Stethem, Combs, Shields and Moreell awards – which recognize individual contributions to the legacy of the Seabees and CEC are profiled in these pages. In addition to several other awards, we also recognize NMCBs 5 and 15, the recipients of the Peltier and Perry awards, respectively, as the most outstanding active and reserve battalion components.

Our *Heritage* section traces Seabee roots back to the Vietnam era when NMCB 4 was tasked with one of the most impressive undertakings of the war – Liberty Bridge. With only 26 'Bees, minimal equipment, enemy forces in all corners and the harsh realities of monsoon season, the battalion constructed the critical passageway in only five months.

On a somber note, we pay tribute to one of our fallen comrades in this issue. CDR Duane G. Wolfe, CEC, was killed by a roadside bomb in Fallujah, Iraq, May 25, while serving as the officer in charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division's Al Anbar Office.

Sincerely,



George L. Markfelder, USN (Ret.)  
Team Leader, *Seabee* Magazine



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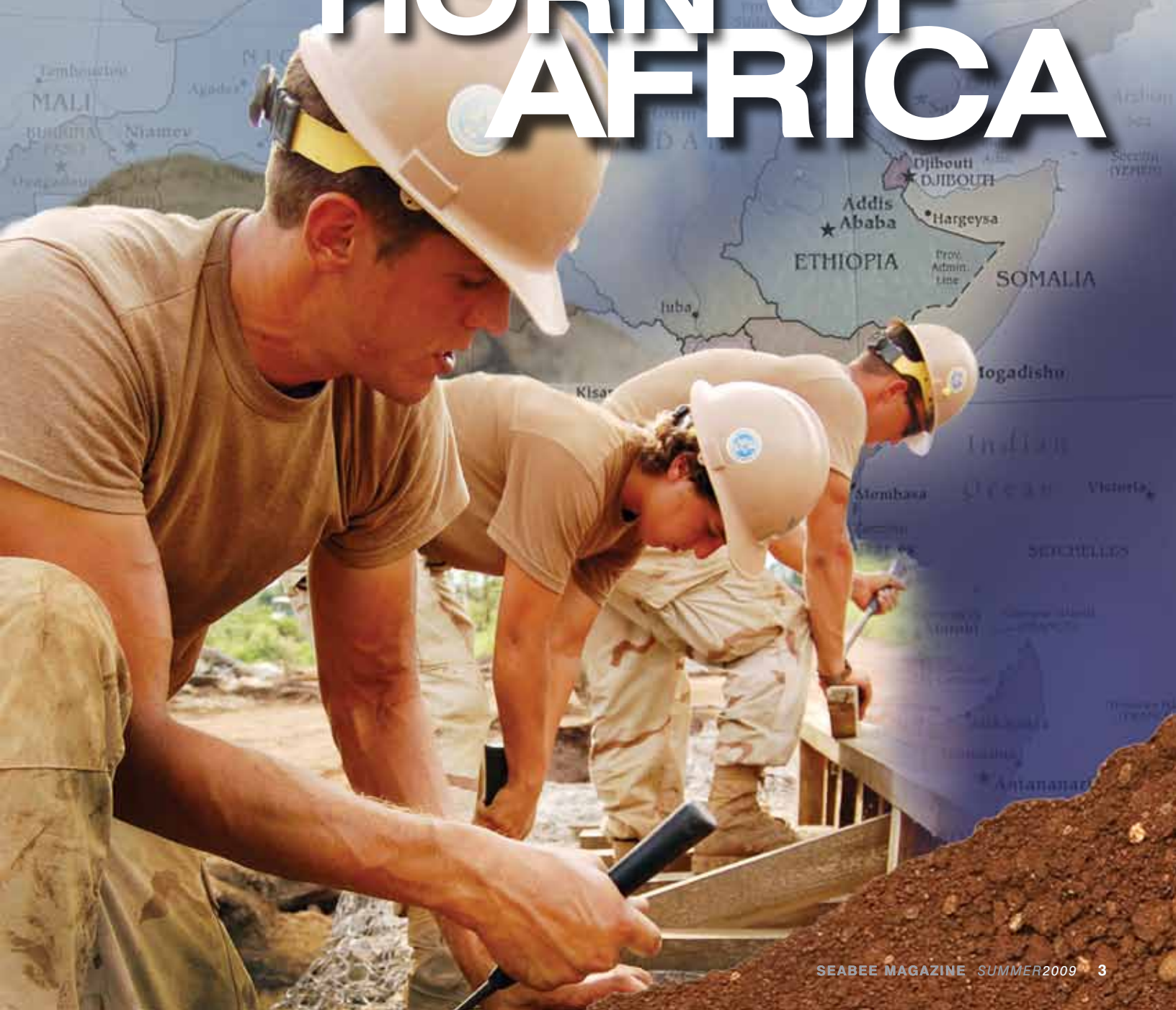
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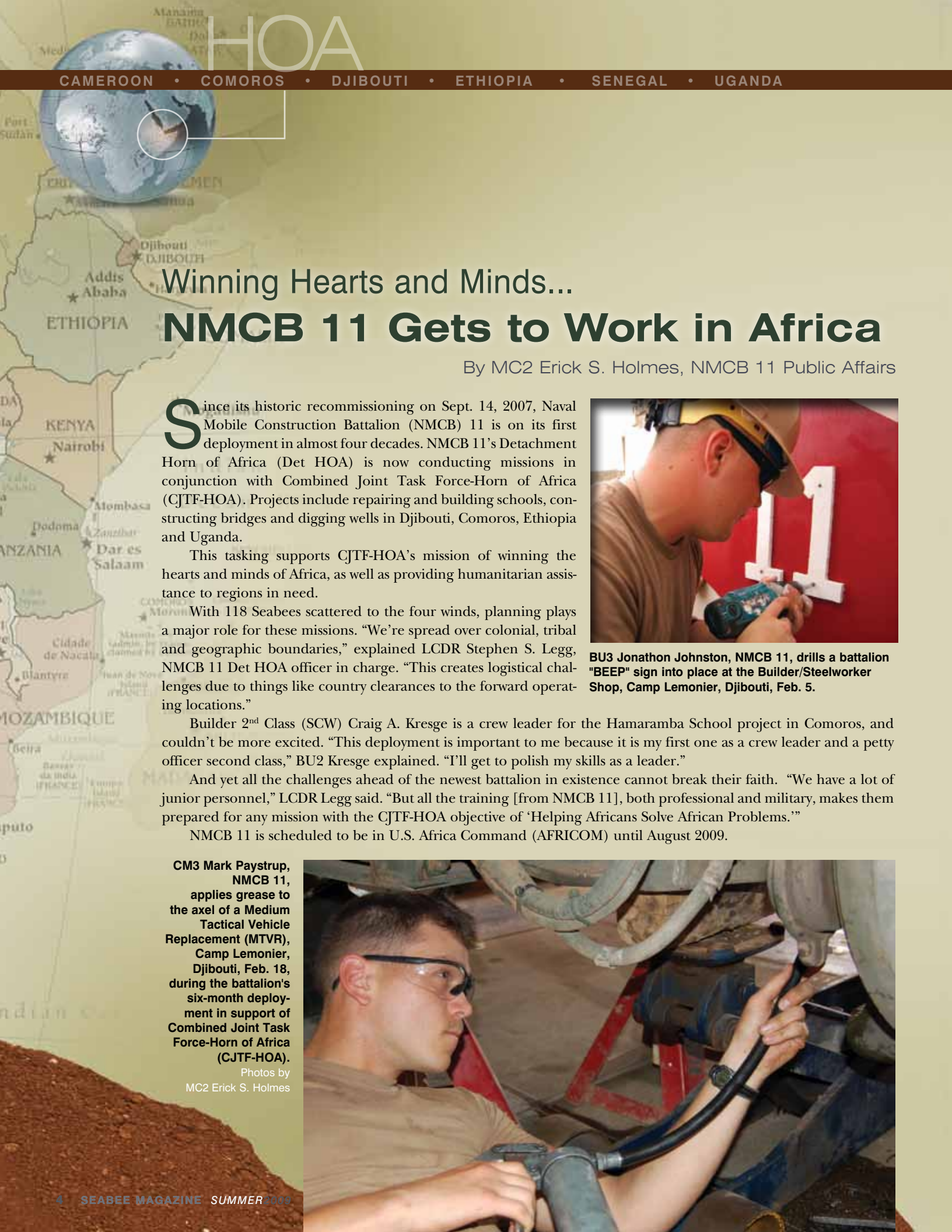
Almost four decades since decommissioning, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 began its first deployment in February, sending Seabees across the globe on various missions — throughout 25 countries in 33 locations across 11 time zones. NMCB 11's Detachment Horn of Africa (Det HOA) is conducting missions in conjunction with Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) – winning the hearts and minds of the African people, building and strengthening these relationships through humanitarian assistance, and keeping ELEVEN's motto – “Constructing the Future, Remembering the Past” – close at hand.

**MARITIME STRATEGY AT WORK: NMCB 11 IN THE**

# HORN OF AFRICA







## Winning Hearts and Minds...

# NMCB 11 Gets to Work in Africa

By MC2 Erick S. Holmes, NMCB 11 Public Affairs

Since its historic recommissioning on Sept. 14, 2007, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 is on its first deployment in almost four decades. NMCB 11's Detachment Horn of Africa (Det HOA) is now conducting missions in conjunction with Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). Projects include repairing and building schools, constructing bridges and digging wells in Djibouti, Comoros, Ethiopia and Uganda.

This tasking supports CJTF-HOA's mission of winning the hearts and minds of Africa, as well as providing humanitarian assistance to regions in need.

With 118 Seabees scattered to the four winds, planning plays a major role for these missions. "We're spread over colonial, tribal and geographic boundaries," explained LCDR Stephen S. Legg, NMCB 11 Det HOA officer in charge. "This creates logistical challenges due to things like country clearances to the forward operating locations."

Builder 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SCW) Craig A. Kresge is a crew leader for the Hamaramba School project in Comoros, and couldn't be more excited. "This deployment is important to me because it is my first one as a crew leader and a petty officer second class," BU2 Kresge explained. "I'll get to polish my skills as a leader."

And yet all the challenges ahead of the newest battalion in existence cannot break their faith. "We have a lot of junior personnel," LCDR Legg said. "But all the training [from NMCB 11], both professional and military, makes them prepared for any mission with the CJTF-HOA objective of 'Helping Africans Solve African Problems.'"

NMCB 11 is scheduled to be in U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) until August 2009.

**CM3 Mark Paystrup, NMCB 11, applies grease to the axel of a Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR), Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, Feb. 18, during the battalion's six-month deployment in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA).**

Photos by  
MC2 Erick S. Holmes



**BU3 Jonathon Johnston, NMCB 11, drills a battalion "BEEP" sign into place at the Builder/Steelworker Shop, Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, Feb. 5.**





## Building a Future for Comoros

By MC2 Erick S. Holmes, NMCB 11 Public Affairs

**N**aval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 Seabees built new facilities at the Hamramba Primary School in Moroni, Comoros, earlier this spring. It is the second primary school for the children of Moroni.

"No matter how long the hours or hard the work, it's worth it in the end," said Builder 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Roylander J. Williams Jr., project crew member. "The education will change the lives of the youths in Moroni."

Working from sunup to sundown, in heat and rain seven days a week, crew members kept motivated since their hard work would benefit the Comorans.



**BU3 Joseph Eberhart, NMCB 11, drills temporary frames into place at the Hamramba School Project, Moroni, Comoros, March 9.**

"We asked for help and the Americans were the first to respond," said Mohamed Ali Mgonri, headmaster, Hamramba Primary School. "It's great having people help. The impact of the work is [of] much value to the Comoran people."

"The Comorans I have spoken to are excited to have this school," said Builder Constructionman Benjamin B. Highfield, project crew member. "After they finish their schooling here, they want to go to the United States or to France to continue a higher education."

"Part of the Seabee [ethos] is we build with compassion for others," Highfield explained. "We've got to get out there and do the job, even if it means getting dirty and staying late."

While NMCB 11 focuses on pouring concrete and bringing columns and walls to life for the schoolhouse, Comoran engineers have begun working side-by-side with the Seabees in a mil-to-mil training program.

"The experience with Seabees and with the way they work is valuable," said Mgonri. "I feel help should always be like this. This will be the model of all schools on the island, with a new perspective and look on reality and education."

**(Left) BU2 Brian Monroe, NMCB 11, pours concrete into place as the battalion constructs a dining facility for the Ecole de Douda Primary School, Grande Douda, Djibouti, April 11.**

Photos by MC2 Erick S. Holmes





## 'Bees Renovate Ethiopian School From Floor to Roof

By MC2 Erick S. Holmes, NMCB 11 Public Affairs

**S**eabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 renovated an auditorium for the Dire Dawa Secondary School, Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, this past spring.

The Seabees literally worked from the ground up, laying tile across the 4,300- square-foot-floor and working their way up to replacing the roof.

The crew hit some speed bumps during the renovation, ranging from having no electricity to working with mismatched tile sizes.

"According to the computer program we use to track our project's progress and calculate man-hours, we did 14 days of work in three days," said Builder 3<sup>rd</sup> Class John Vetter, crew member.

The Sailors' success came from their focus and determination to finish the school on schedule, according to Builder Constructionman Apprentice Scott Bishop, another NMCB 11 crew member.

"We have worked late and through lunch multiple times without even realizing it," said BUCA Bishop. "All of us just want to see the project to the end that much."

The completed auditorium will provide a large location for school plays, public speeches and other gatherings.

**Seabees assigned to NMCB 11 clean and prepare an auditorium floor for laying tile at Dire Dawa Secondary School, Ethiopia, March 6, during the first part of its deployment to CJTF-HOA.**

Photo by MC2 Erick S. Holmes







## NMCB 11 Supports Africa Partnership Station

By EA3 Christopher Kelly, NMCB 11 Public Affairs

(Above) Children and staff at Save the Children Alliance Orphanage in Limbe, Cameroon, benefit from toys, school items and first aid supplies delivered by NMCB 11 Seabees in April, embarked onboard USS *Nashville* (LPD 13) in support of Africa Partnership Station.

(Below) EO1 Joshua Brand (left) and CM3 David Voss, NMCB 11, unload supplies at Save the Children Alliance Orphanage in Limbe, Cameroon, in April.

Photos by EA3 Christopher Kelly



Seabees from NMCB 11's Det Cameroon teamed up with Africa Partnership Station (APS) and USS *Nashville* (LPD 13) to deliver medical, hygiene and school supplies to local organizations in Limbe, Cameroon, in April.

APS began in 2006 with a goal to improve maritime security and development in Africa's coastal nations. Ships assigned to this mission travel to ports where U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel train local forces in law enforcement, medical readiness, seamanship and boat maintenance. In addition, essential supplies are delivered and construction projects are undertaken to improve conditions for organizations in need.

In early April, Seabees, Sailors, Marines and representatives from the Spanish, Portuguese and Brazilian militaries joined APS to transport more than three loads of supplies via a Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) vehicle.

First stop was the Regional Hospital in Limbe with necessities such as syringes, hand soap and sterile pads. The regional hospital houses a staff of approximately 200 and serves a region with almost 10 million people, 30-40 percent of which are unable to pay medical fees.

The group then headed to the Open Door Medical Development on the outskirts of town. Dr. John Hibbert, U.S. Air Force retired and a former member of the U.S. Navy, and his wife, Omelda, a registered nurse, opened this clinic and school to provide free medical, dental and optical care as well as teach the profession to local students. As Equipment Operator 1<sup>st</sup> Class Joshua Brand pulled the MTVR cargo truck in, the Hibberts and their students welcomed the service members with smiles and open arms.

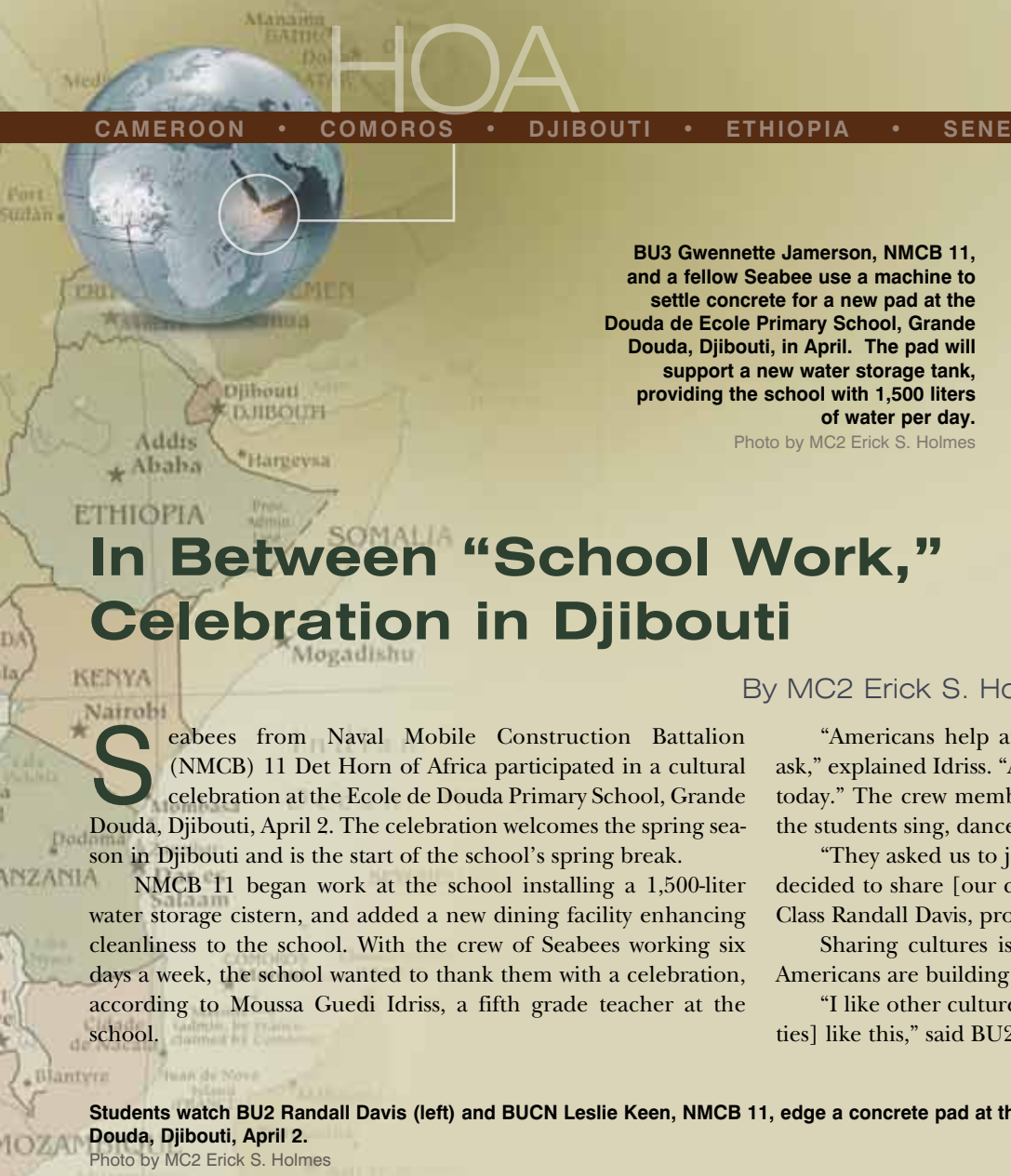
Hibbert spoke of the impact American military humanitarian efforts have on citizens in underdeveloped countries. "This non-combatative, compassionate side of the armed forces builds important, positive relationships with people in need around the world," he said.

The last two destinations were the Save the Children Alliance Orphanage and the Ecole Matronelle Children's School where Seabees and other military members handed out first aid supplies, school items and toys. Construction Mechanic 3<sup>rd</sup> Class David Voss, the driver delivering the supplies, said, "It felt good to go out, help the community and watch the kids light up when they saw the toys."

NMCB 11 Seabees also worked on improvements at the Ecole Matronelle Children's School. They repaired leaky roofs, added office spaces, painted and ran electricity to multiple classrooms.

Seabees also teamed up with Marines to repair parts of the Limbe Wildlife Refuge. Working at the refuge, the Seabees and Marines interacted with baby monkeys while on the jobsite, quite a unique experience for these service members.





BU3 Gwennette Jamerson, NMCB 11, and a fellow Seabee use a machine to settle concrete for a new pad at the Douda de Ecole Primary School, Grande Douda, Djibouti, in April. The pad will support a new water storage tank, providing the school with 1,500 liters of water per day.

Photo by MC2 Erick S. Holmes



## In Between “School Work,” Celebration in Djibouti

By MC2 Erick S. Holmes, NMCB 11 Public Affairs

Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 Det Horn of Africa participated in a cultural celebration at the Ecole de Douda Primary School, Grande Douda, Djibouti, April 2. The celebration welcomes the spring season in Djibouti and is the start of the school’s spring break.

NMCB 11 began work at the school installing a 1,500-liter water storage cistern, and added a new dining facility enhancing cleanliness to the school. With the crew of Seabees working six days a week, the school wanted to thank them with a celebration, according to Moussa Guedi Idriss, a fifth grade teacher at the school.

“Americans help and always do anything for the school we ask,” explained Idriss. “And we are friends – we wanted them here today.” The crew members took a break from work and watched the students sing, dance and laugh on their last day of school.

“They asked us to join them the day before the event and we decided to share [our culture] with them,” explained Builder 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Randall Davis, project crew leader.

Sharing cultures is an example of the positive relationship Americans are building with Djiboutians, said Idriss.

“I like other cultures and participating in unique [opportunities] like this,” said BU2 Davis. “I’m glad we had the chance.”

Students watch BU2 Randall Davis (left) and BUCN Leslie Keen, NMCB 11, edge a concrete pad at the Douda de Ecole Primary School, Grande Douda, Djibouti, April 2.

Photo by MC2 Erick S. Holmes





## Seabees Engineer Water Crossing in Uganda



Seabees from NMCB 11 inspect and remove debris from a bridge project in Aromo, Uganda, March 3. The original structure was destroyed during a flood.

Photo by MC2 Erick S. Holmes

By PO1(SW) Dustin Q. Diaz, CJTF-HOA Public Affairs,  
and CE3 Jennifer McGhee, NMCB 4, Det-Horn of Africa

**T**he Walela Low Water Crossing, completed May 7, now provides Uganda's Walela Village residents with easy access to the entire village, including primary schools and health care centers – thanks to Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCBs) 4 and 11, in partnership with local engineers from the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF).

"I [was] very excited to take part in such an important and challenging project," said Builder 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Robert Gurin, NMCB 4.

"I believe establishing relationships between the local populous, UPDF and the Seabees will allow us to show how skilled and versatile the [we] are, while building a friendly image for U.S. forces."

"This is a great development for the people of Uganda and this region and a great achievement for the U.S. Navy and the UPDF," Lieutenant B.Y. Gala, UPDF, said. Gala led a group of UPDF engineers who worked alongside the Seabees. Another group of Ugandan soldiers served as force protection for the joint camp.

"We've been able to pass on a lot of technical knowledge to

them, instead of coming in with a show of force," Chief Builder (SCW) Jonathan Poellot, NMCB 11, said. "We've formed good relationships, and we're teaching them to do construction (and) perform maintenance on the roads. Sharing our knowledge with these guys...will greatly improve their engineering ability."

Many of the Seabees have befriended local residents, who have watched the construction every day. They said it means a lot to them that they can make a positive impact on people in need.

"When we leave here, [we'll know] we've made a difference in their day-to-day lives," said Builder 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SCW) Peter Belcastro, crew leader. "We live in pretty rugged conditions, with the tents and the outhouses, but anytime you look outside the concertina wire, you know the people out there have it so much worse, so it's a very humbling experience."

Poellot praised their performance and dedication.

"They [the Seabees] took the nothing that was there and built a 150-foot bridge," Poellot said. "Any time you can do something like that without getting hurt, it's a good evolution."



Local residents of Aromo, Uganda, look on as NMCB 11 Seabees grade the area surrounding the Walela Culvert Bridge, May 5. This was the final construction phase of a bridge that connects the main Lira road to the Aromo sub-county.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dawn Price, CJTF-HOA





## Seabees from NMCBs 3, 4 and LOGSU 1 Receive 2008 Stethem, Combs and Shields Awards

The Chief of Civil Engineers  
RADM Greg Shear announced  
the recipients of the 2008  
Stethem, Combs and Shields  
awards. These annual awards  
are presented by the Civil Engineer  
Corps and Seabee Historical  
Foundation to recognize individual  
contributions to the legacy of the  
Seabees and CEC.



**RADM Greg Shear (center), Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers, presents the Stethem Award to UT1 Leslie Cowan (right), NMCB 4, during the Seabee Ball, Arlington, Va., March 21.**

Photo by MC1(SW) Kurt Riggs

### STEELWORKER 2<sup>ND</sup> CLASS ROBERT D. STETHEM AWARD **UT1 Leslie Cowan, NMCB 4**

UT1 Leslie Cowan is the 2008 recipient of the Stethem Award in recognition of his moral courage during CENTCOM deployment in Afghanistan, as well as his contributions to NMCB 4 during the battalion's homeport. During this period, he proved himself a superb professional with unparalleled leadership and superior technical competency while serving in numerous key roles for the battalion and Joint Detachment Afghanistan, including platoon commander, project supervisor, quality control officer and safety officer.

Within weeks of the battalion's CENTCOM deployment, NMCB 4 was tasked with a short-fused Afghanistan priority engineering support mission. Cowan was hand-picked by the chain of command to assist in the execution of this critical mission. His phenomenal efforts during this period enabled the detachment to deploy into an active war zone in preparation for crucial tasking at four forward operating bases.

Cowan was one of the key construction subject matter experts in Afghanistan, assisting in the completion of both a brigade and battalion tactical operations center, two fuel points (900K+—gallon capacity), three helicopter landing zones, four 155 MM firing points, an ammunition transfer and holding point, supply support activity, battalion and unit motorpools, an entry control point, and more than 15,000 meters of HESCO barriers.

*Named for Steelworker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (DV) Robert Dean Stethem, the award recognizes outstanding individual moral courage in support of the traditions of the Seabees while in the course of actual operations. Petty Officer Stethem was a victim of the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in June 1985, after being singled out from passengers as a U.S. Navy Sailor and killed by members of the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah when their demands to release 766 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel were not met. He was returning home with fellow members of UCT 1 after completing a routine assignment in Greece. Stethem was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star.*





**BUC(SCW) Hugh Callahan, NMCB 3, receives information inside the Electronic Combat Operations Center during a Chiefs and Officers Field Training exercise, Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 28.**

Photo by LT Martin Ranalli

#### REAR ADMIRAL LEWIS B. COMBS AWARD

### Chief Builder(SCW) Hugh Callahan, NMCB 3

BUC(SCW) Hugh Callahan is the recipient of the Combs Award for meritorious achievement while serving as Naval Mobile Construction Battalion's (NMCB's) operations chief and assistant officer-in-charge (AOIC) of Task Force Sierra Detachment 4 supporting Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force Afghanistan from January–December 2008. Chief Callahan flawlessly coordinated the expedient construction of more than 30 projects on Bagram Airfield and various remote firebases throughout Afghanistan. He displayed impressive leadership, poise and decisive judgment when a minefield fire threatened the detachment's equipment yard. As AOIC, he also maintained impressive focus on warfare qualification, professional advancement and jobsite safety. Chief Callahan's troops flourished under his leadership and, as a result, two Det 4 members were selected NMCB 3 Seabees of the Quarter, in addition to four selections as Bagram Airfield Sailors of the Month.

Under his leadership, Det 4 Seabees earned 28 Seabee Combat Warfare pins (more than any other Det in the battalion), advanced 18 of 46 troops eligible to sit for the Fall 2008 exam and achieved the best safety record of any detachment during the battalion's CENTCOM deployment.

*This award is named in honor of RADM Lewis B. Combs and is presented to an individual who has made the most outstanding contribution in perpetuating the legacy of the Seabees and the Civil Engineer Corps. Combs served as chief deputy to Admiral Ben Moreell, founder of the Seabees, and helped create the "fighter builders" and the Civil Engineer Corps. He was active with the Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association from its inception in 1970, first as Chairman of the Board of Directors and later as Chairman Emeritus, until his death at age 101.*



**UT1(SCW) Jesse Scherer (right), NMCB 3, calls cadence to keep his company in step during a two-and-a-half-mile march, Port Hueneme, Calif., Nov. 7.**

Photo by MC1 Carmichael Yopez

#### CONSTRUCTION MECHANIC 3<sup>RD</sup> CLASS MARVIN G. SHIELDS AWARD

### Utilitiesman 1<sup>st</sup> Class(SCW) Jesse Scherer, LOGSU 1

UT1(SCW) Jesse Scherer is the recipient of the 2008 Shields Award for his superb leadership, unmatched contingency construction expertise, loyal devotion to duty and unwavering commitment to the mission of the Navy and Naval Construction Force. A former member of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 3, he provided superior service while deployed for seven months as part of Task Force Sierra, which supported engineering operations to multiple Joint Task Forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Serving as project officer in charge with Task Force Sierra Detail 4 in Afghanistan, Scherer led two teams of 42 Seabees and 15 local nationals in the construction of 36 facilities for two critical forward operating bases, allowing Afghani forces to take the fight directly to the Taliban insurgency. Scherer also served with distinction as the detail's safety and quality control program manager.

Scherer's intrusive and energetic leadership style motivated and focused his troops. Ensuring safe construction practices while deployed to an austere, high-threat combat environment, he consistently delivered the highest quality craftsmanship under demanding conditions, despite material and logistical challenges. Now part of Naval Special Warfare (NSW), Scherer's inspirational leadership and stalwart dedication to those he serves continues.

*This award is presented for outstanding technical and leadership ability, and is given in honor of Construction Mechanic 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Marvin Shields, a 26-year-old Seabee serving in Vietnam with NMCB 11 in 1965. Shields' unit, along with Army Special Forces and South Vietnam Defense personnel, came under attack by 2,000 Viet Cong and, although greatly outnumbered, withstood intense close-range combat for almost three hours. Shields and an Army lieutenant volunteered to man a rocket launcher, destroying an enemy machine gun position. Despite repeatedly being hit, Shields fought on until he was mortally wounded; he died the following day while being evacuated by helicopter. For these heroic actions that cost him his life, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor – becoming the first (and so far only) Seabee to win the nation's highest award, and also the first Navy man to be so decorated for action in Vietnam*



## Shephard Receives 2008 Moreell Medal



U.S. Navy photo

As the recipient of the 2008 Moreell Medal, CDR Glenn Shephard is recognized for his superior performance as director, Logistics and Infrastructure Division, Directorate of Defense Affairs, Multi-national Security Transition Command-Iraq. In this capacity, he defined and programmed critical requirements, and then awarded construction contracts for a \$642 million program at 28 regional logistics bases that enables the sustainment of 275,000 Iraqi troops. In addition, Shephard led the development of a \$1.5 billion annual base operation and maintenance budget, and a \$760 million national maintenance contract, which established 15 regional work centers. Most significant were his direct contributions to the long-term viability of the democratically elected Iraqi government. He mentored Iraqi logistics and infrastructure advisors on actionable metric development, enabling successful Iraqi-led counterinsurgent operations in Basra, Mosul, Sadr City, Diyala and Al Amarah. Additionally, he was the driving force in the development of a comprehensive lifecycle facilities management training program for Iraqi leadership, enhancing governing capability. His tireless efforts and devotion to duty have directly and significantly advanced the transition of facilities and logistics operations from multi-national to Iraqi government control.



*The Moreell Medal is given annually by the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) to an officer of the Navy Civil Engineering Corps, active or reserve, or to a civilian employee of the naval engineering command in recognition of outstanding contributions to military engineering. The award is named in honor of ADM Ben Moreell, CEC, who served as the first chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks (later known as the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, NAVFAC) and chief of the Civil Engineer Corps. Known as the "Father of the Seabees," ADM Moreell established the Naval Construction Force in 1942.*

## NMCBs 5, 15 Receive 2008 Peltier, Perry Awards

By SKC(SCW) Colleen Dickson, NMCB 15, and NAVFAC Headquarters Public Affairs



**RADM Richard Cellon (left), commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Naval Construction Division (1NCD), presents CDR Scott Hurst, commanding officer, NMCB 5, with the Peltier Award at an all-hands call on a project site in Southern Afghanistan. The Peltier Award is presented annually to the best active duty battalion in the Naval Construction Force.**

Photo by MC2(SCW/AW) Patrick W. Mullen III

### NMCB 5 "Professionals" Win Peltier Award in Afghanistan

As the most outstanding active component, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 5 men and women distinguished themselves in a variety of venues to earn the Peltier Award. While executing a challenging and arduous deployment in the Pacific Fleet area of operation, the battalion's span of control included 11 detail sites and five exercises. NMCB 5's success was attributed to timely completion of operational tasking, high-quality construction products and a safe working environment. The Professionals' second-to-none performance and unequalled motivation demonstrates the epitome of the "Can Do" legacy of the Navy's Seabees.

*Named for two legendary and distinguished CEC/Seabee leaders – Rear Admiral Eugene J. Peltier and Rear Admiral John R. Perry – the Peltier and Perry awards recognize the most outstanding Naval Construction Battalions in the active and reserve components. Units selected for this prestigious award are recognized in the Naval Construction Force for leadership, readiness, construction accomplishments, equipment management, logistics programs, retention and safety.*



**CAPT S. L. Young (center), commodore, 9<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (9NCR), presents the 2008 Perry Award pennant to NMCB 15 Seabees at their headquarters in Belton, Mo., May 16. Reserve Battalion as LCDR Jeff Gerken (left) and LT Jim Zeiger (right) look on. The Perry Award is presented annually to the best reserve battalion in the Naval Construction Force.**

Photo by YN1 Shannon Murray

### NMCB 15 "Bat(s) out of Hell" Takes Home Perry Award

While supporting military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 15 thrived despite exceptionally challenging environmental conditions. The battalion also did not have any convoy security mission casualties despite executing more missions than any prior battalion. Pulling together Seabees from 54 Navy Operational Support Centers, NMCB 15 embraced the different skills each brought to the table and formed a cohesive team of outstanding men and women fully capable of operating in the hostile and austere environment of Southwest Asia. The battalion's exceptional accomplishments fully demonstrated the depth of its professionalism, commitment to excellence and "Can Do" ethos.



## Kuriatnyk Selected as Navy Spouse of the Year

By MCSN Michael Wright,  
22<sup>nd</sup> NCR Public Affairs



U.S. Navy photo

After 12 weeks of online voting and 100 Navy spouse nominations, *Military Spouse Magazine* selected Christy Kuriatnyk, Ellerslie, Ga., as the 2009 Navy Spouse of the Year. Kuriatnyk is the wife of LCDR Alex Kuriatnyk, 22<sup>nd</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (NCR), Gulfport, Miss., and mother of three.

Kuriatnyk, the daughter of a Korean War veteran, has always had a sense of pride and patriotism for her country. "It started with my father, he was in the Army. He

always supported the military in any way he could," she said. "Growing up, supporting the military became very important to me." Now as an adult, Kuriatnyk not only supports the military, but the spouses and children of deployed service members.

Kuriatnyk, a certified child passenger safety technician and a certified lead poisoning inspector, created several successful safety awareness programs for children throughout Georgia.



(Above, left to right) Dr. John Winkler, principal deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs; H.C. "Barney" Barnum Jr., assistant secretary of the Navy (Manpower & Reserve Affairs) Acting; CAPT Donald Hedrick; Renee White; CMDCM John T. Bonaccorso; VADM Dirk J. Debbink, chief of Navy Reserve Commander, Navy Reserve Force; and VADM Norb Ryan (Ret.), president, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

U.S. Navy photo

## "No Family Left Behind"... NMCB 24 Honored with Readiness Award

By CM2 Nicole Harmon, NMCB 24

In recognition of its outstanding Ombudsman Program, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 24 received the Department of Defense 2009 Reserve Family Readiness Award at a ceremony held in the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon in Washington D.C., Feb. 13. Accepting the award on behalf of the battalion were Renee White, command ombudsman, Command Master Chief John T. Bonaccorso, and CAPT Donald Hedrick, commodore, 3<sup>rd</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (NCR).



CMDCM Delbert M. Terrell (center), MUSE Division, NFELC, consults with field experts about creating a ramp to release camels trapped during a train derailment near Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Africa, Oct. 11. Camp Public Works and NMCB 4 Air Det also participated in releasing the camels.

Photo by CEC(SCW) Jim Frando

## Seabee Recognized with DoD African American History Award

By Linda Wadley, Public Affairs Officer,  
Naval Facilities Expeditionary Logistics Center

Master Chief Utilities Constructionman(SCW/FMF) Delbert Terrell, Naval Facilities Expeditionary Logistics Center (NFELC), received the Department of Defense (DoD) African American History Month Recognition Award at a ceremony at Alabama A&M University, Normal, Ala., Feb. 25.

"This award is a culmination of my troops, fellow chiefs and senior leadership taking care of me, and of course my family for being so supportive," said UCCM Terrell. "I simply try to stay positive, focused and committed to giving 115 percent to them and to the Navy."

Terrell earned the award for his leadership and accomplishments during a seven-month deployment to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Africa, from April to October 2008. In his role as prime power specialist with NFELC's Mobile Utilities Support Equipment (MUSE) Division, a 17-megawatt power plant, 600,000-gallon water production facility and a 200,000-gallon-per-day waste water treatment plant were constructed and brought online to service more than 2,400 personnel at Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and Camp Lemonnier.

"The award honors service men and women who have supported the global war on terrorism, demonstrating 'role model' qualities and the Navy Core Values," said LCDR Anthony Dapp, NFELC operations and plans officer. "I cannot think of anyone who better personifies these qualities than Master Chief Terrell."

Terrell is currently command master chief, Naval Construction Training Center, Port Hueneme, Calif.





I congratulate you on your successes and look forward to the future and the challenges we will face together as we continue to build on our proud legacy.

— RADM Greg Shear, Commander,  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers

HAPPY  
67TH

To mark 67 years of “Can Do” pride and heritage, Seabees around the world took a moment on March 5, 2009, to reflect and remember – and some even celebrated by cutting into big cakes with frosted bees on top. There has never been a better time to be a Seabee...

(Below) BUCN Amanda Glover (second from left) and CNCM Bernard Davis (third from left) cut the birthday cake at the Seabee Ball, Kandahar, Afghanistan, March 15, while CAPT Jeffrey T. Borowy (far left), commander, 25<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (NCR), and CMC Sean Libby look on. It is tradition for the youngest and oldest Seabees at the ball to cut the cake.

Photo by MC2 Dale Miller

(Below) MCPON Rick West cracks a smile after telling a joke to the attendees at the 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Seabee Ball in Gulfport, Miss., April 4. MCPON West served as the honorary guest speaker for the ball.

Photo By MCSN Michael D. Wright



(Above left) Seabees assigned to Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southwest, Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB) 1, Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 303, Naval Special Warfare Group (NSWG) 1 Logistics Support Unit and various other local San Diego commands celebrate the 67<sup>th</sup> Seabee and 142<sup>nd</sup> Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) anniversary at the Seabee Ball, Sheraton Hotel and Marina, San Diego, Calif., March 14. Cutting the ceremonial cake are (from left to right) RADM Mark A. Handley, deputy commander, Navy Installations Command, and director of Shore Readiness for Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Logistics) Washington; CEC Ed Lindstrom, the oldest Seabee at the event; CECN Jamie Rotarius, the youngest Seabee at the event; and CAPT Steve Wirsching, commanding officer, NAVFAC Southwest.

Photo by MC2 Brian Morales





**RDML (sel.)  
Katherine L. Gregory**  
U.S. Navy photo



**RDML (sel.)  
Kevin R. Slates**  
U.S. Navy photo

## Gregory and Slates Selected for Flag

By 1NCD Public Affairs, and  
NAVFAC Headquarters Public Affairs

**C**APT Katherine L. Gregory and CAPT Kevin R. Slates have been selected for appointment to the rank of rear admiral (lower half).

CAPT Gregory is currently serving as chief of staff, First Naval Construction Division, Norfolk, Va., and previously served as commander, 30<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Regiment, Port Hueneme, Calif. Following Senate confirmation, Gregory will become the first female flag officer in the Civil Engineer Corps.

CAPT Slates is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC), Washington, D.C., and previously served as the commanding officer of NAVFAC Washington and Naval District Washington Regional Engineer. In his new position, Slates will be assigned as commander, NAVFAC Atlantic, Norfolk, Va.

## Handley and Mossey Selected for Second Star

By NAVFAC Headquarters Public Affairs

**R**DML Christopher J. Mossey has been selected for appointment to the rank of rear admiral. Mossey is currently serving as commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic, Norfolk, Va. RDML Mossey will be assigned as director, Ashore Readiness Division, N46, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations/deputy commander, Naval Installations Command, Washington, D.C.

RDML Mark A. Handley has also been selected for appointment to the rank of rear admiral. Handley is currently serving as director, Ashore Readiness Division, N46, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations/deputy commander, Navy Installations Command, Washington, D.C. RDML Handley will be assigned as commander, First Naval Construction Division/commander, Naval Construction Forces Command, Norfolk, Va.



**RADM (sel.)  
Mark A. Handley**  
U.S. Navy photo



**RADM (sel.)  
Christopher J. Mossey**  
U.S. Navy photo

## NMCB 27 Transfers Authority to NMCB 24 in Iraq



In a ceremony attended by battalion members and personnel from other coalition units deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 27 transferred authority to NMCB 24 at Al Asad Air Base, March 28. Participating in the Transfer of Authority ceremony were (from left to right) Lieutenant Douglas Orr, chaplain, NMCB 24; CDR James Robbins, commanding officer, NMCB 27; CAPT Arthur Edgar, Commander Task Group 56.2; and CDR Craig Scharton, commanding officer, NMCB 24. NMCB 27 is headquartered at Brunswick, Maine, while NMCB 24 is headquartered at Huntsville, Ala. Both deployed battalions are comprised of naval reservists from more than 30 different states.

Photo by CM2 Nicole Harmon



# YEAR OF THE SEABEES • CIVIL ENGINEER

The Year of the Seabees and Civil Engineer Corps: Can Do!" exhibit opened April 4 at the Naval Heritage Center in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with the Navy Memorial's Annual Charging of the Fountains and Blessing of the Fleets. Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers RADM Greg Shear spoke at the 18<sup>th</sup> annual event.

"We are extremely proud to be part of this annual fleet blessing, and welcome the public to the Heritage Center to learn about the role of the Seabees, Civil Engineer Corps and the Naval Facilities Engineering Command," RADM Shear said. "To be part of a naval tradition so steeped in history and rich in heritage is just a tremendous honor."

The exhibit features the history of the Seabees, Civil Engineer Corps and NAVFAC, training and readiness, static displays, WWII and current-day uniforms, and a simulated combat outpost, as well as graphics and storyboards highlighting support provided to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps around the world. The year-long exhibition is free and open to the public.

By NAVFAC Headquarters Public Affairs



(Above) Museum visitors are greeted by the Seabee mascot (at left) and a larger-than-life-size cut-out of BUCN Prince Anumah, NMCB 7. In the photo cut-out, BUCN Anumah drills holes in lumber for concrete forms for a military working dog kennel facility in Baharia, Iraq, Nov. 2008.



(Above) Dawn French, a resident of College Park, Md., studies uniforms from past and present during the exhibit's open day at the Naval Heritage Center. The Purple Heart Memorial can be seen in the background at left.

(Below) Children pose on a simulated fighting position built in the Naval Heritage Center by CBMU 202, which even features a try-on trunk of Seabee gear and equipment.

U.S. Navy photos by Mason Lowery





# CORPS: "CAN DO!" IS UNDERWAY



(Left) A life-size Underwater Construction Team diving suit depicts the work of 'Bees under the sea.

U.S. Navy photo by Mason Lowery

## CBMU 202 Senior Chief Builds Memorial as Labor of Love...and Respect

By MC1(SW) Kurt Riggs, NAVFAC Headquarters Public Affairs

**A**mong the exhibits at the Navy Heritage Center paying tribute to the men and women of the Naval Construction Force and Civil Engineer Corps, a structure fills a corner across from mannequins displaying various uniforms of Seabees and CEC officers through the years.

Built by Senior Chief Builder (SCW) Don Bankey, Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 202, and faced with purple heartwood, the monument is a tribute to fallen Seabees and CEC officers from the current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is a small box, representing the Purple Heart Medal, and atop it is a piece of glass.

Etched with the names of those fallen, this glass is already finding a place among Seabee/CEC lore. The craftsmen were provided a list of names for use in creating the piece, but the glass cracked during delivery. That day happened to be the same day LTJG Francis (Frankie) Toner, CEC, was killed by an insurgent in Afghanistan, the first CEC officer killed in action since the Vietnam War.

LTJG Toner was killed during PT, when a local national, masquerading as a member of the still-under-construction Afghan army, began firing his weapon. Toner, a running back for his high school football team, began charging the gunman, only to be cut down with a mortal wound. He was interred at Arlington National Cemetery in April, with full military honors.

With the exhibit featuring the Purple Heart monument due to open and with just enough time remaining, the glass was updated to reflect this most recent warrior's sacrifice and solidify his place among those heroes immortalized on the glass.

*Editor's Note: CDR Duane G. Wolfe, CEC, killed May 25 in Iraq has been added to the Purple Heart Memorial at the Heritage Center. For more information, please see page 21.*

(Right) The Purple Heart Memorial at the Heritage Center provides a quiet place for reflection and remembrance. The memorial was created by BUCS(SCW) Don Bankey, CBMU 202, in support of the "Year of the Seabees/CEC" Exhibit.

U.S. Navy photo  
by Mason Lowery





# Seabees in Vietnam

## A BRIEF HISTORY



NMCB 4 dedicated Liberty Bridge in 1967. The structure was the largest timber bridge construction of its kind and the largest construction of any type during the Vietnam War.

(Background) One of the most impressive accomplishments of the Vietnam War, Liberty Bridge spanned the Thu Bon River and was built to withstand the expansion of the river during monsoon season.



A Seabee from NMCB 4 works on Liberty Bridge, designed to sustain 60 tons and serve as a passageway for the heaviest of military equipment through an area with a high concentration of enemy forces.



Completed in 1967, the bridge was 2,040 feet long and towered 32 feet above the low water level. Today, only remnants of the bridge pilings remain.

Article submitted by Lara Godbille, Director, U.S. Navy Seabee Museum



(Right) Tasked with one of the most impressive undertakings of the Vietnam War, NMCB 4 constructed Liberty Bridge during monsoon season. With the help of 26 Seabees and minimal use of equipment, the bridge was built in just five months.

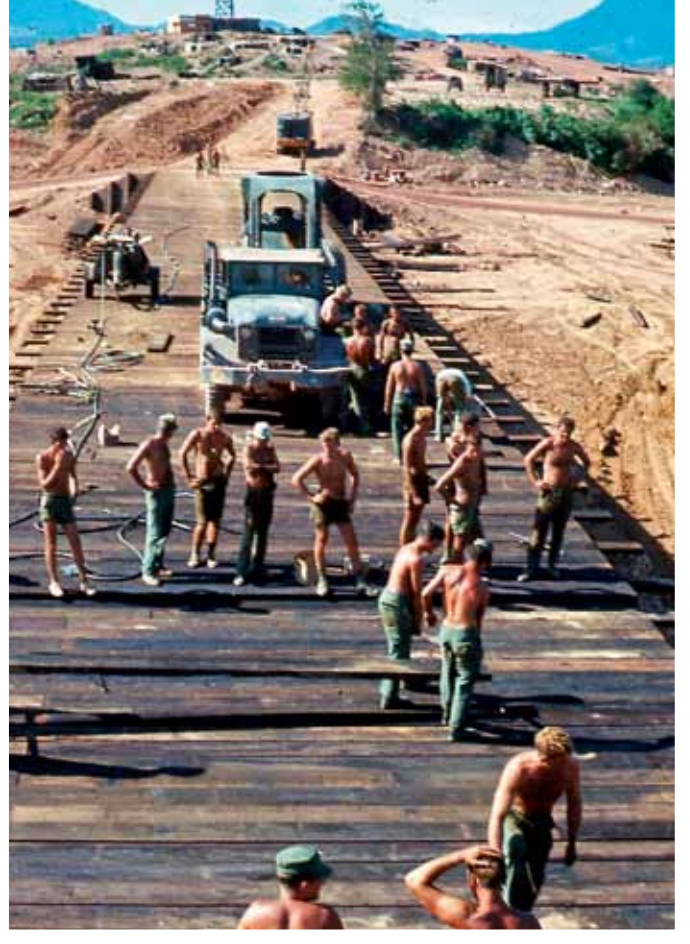
Beginning in 1964, the United States military escalation in South Vietnam interrupted the normal peacetime deployment pattern of the Naval Construction Force (NCF). Due to their unique mission, the Seabees were slated to play an important and historic role in the growing American involvement in Southeast Asia. By the fall of 1968, when requirements in South Vietnam reached their peak, worldwide Seabee strength grew to more than 26,000 men, serving in 21 full-sized Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCBs), two Construction Battalion Maintenance Units (CBMUs) and two Amphibious Construction Battalions (ACBs).

Although Seabees first began serving as advisors in South Vietnam as early as 1955, the first units to deploy regularly in Southeast Asia were the newly formed 13-man Seabee Teams. In 1963, Seabee Teams deployed to Thailand to assist in the Royal Thai government's Accelerated Rural Development Program. Deemed a success, Seabee Teams were soon sent to South Vietnam where they continued to deploy until 1972.

The first full Seabee battalion to serve in Vietnam arrived on May 7, 1965, to build an expeditionary airfield for the Marines at Chu Lai. Others soon followed causing the Seabee community to grow from 9,400 in mid-1965 to almost three times that number by 1969.

Accomplishments in Vietnam were impressive. Seabees built roads, airfields, cantonments, warehouses, hospitals, storage units, bunkers and other facilities needed to support the combatant forces. In 1965, the Seabee portion of the Vietnam Construction Program was concentrated at three northern coastal ports: Danang, Chu Lai and Phu Bai. As they had throughout the South Pacific during World War II, the Seabees had "contributed mightily to constructing the vast infrastructure necessary for fighting a major war in a primitive, remote area," according to Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze. In 1966, the Seabees continued to expand these bases, erecting more permanent structures for personnel and equipment.

Among the numerous construction projects completed in 1967 was an alternate airfield at Dong Ha and the famed Liberty Bridge, located 80 miles southwest of Danang. Even though the monsoon season had already begun, the airstrip was completed in only 38 days. Built to withstand the incredible expansion of the Thu Bon River during monsoon season, Liberty Bridge was 2,040 feet long and towered 32 feet above the low water level.



*...the Seabees were required to work in a remote area in South Vietnam known to contain large concentrations of enemy forces and still completed the project in only five months.*

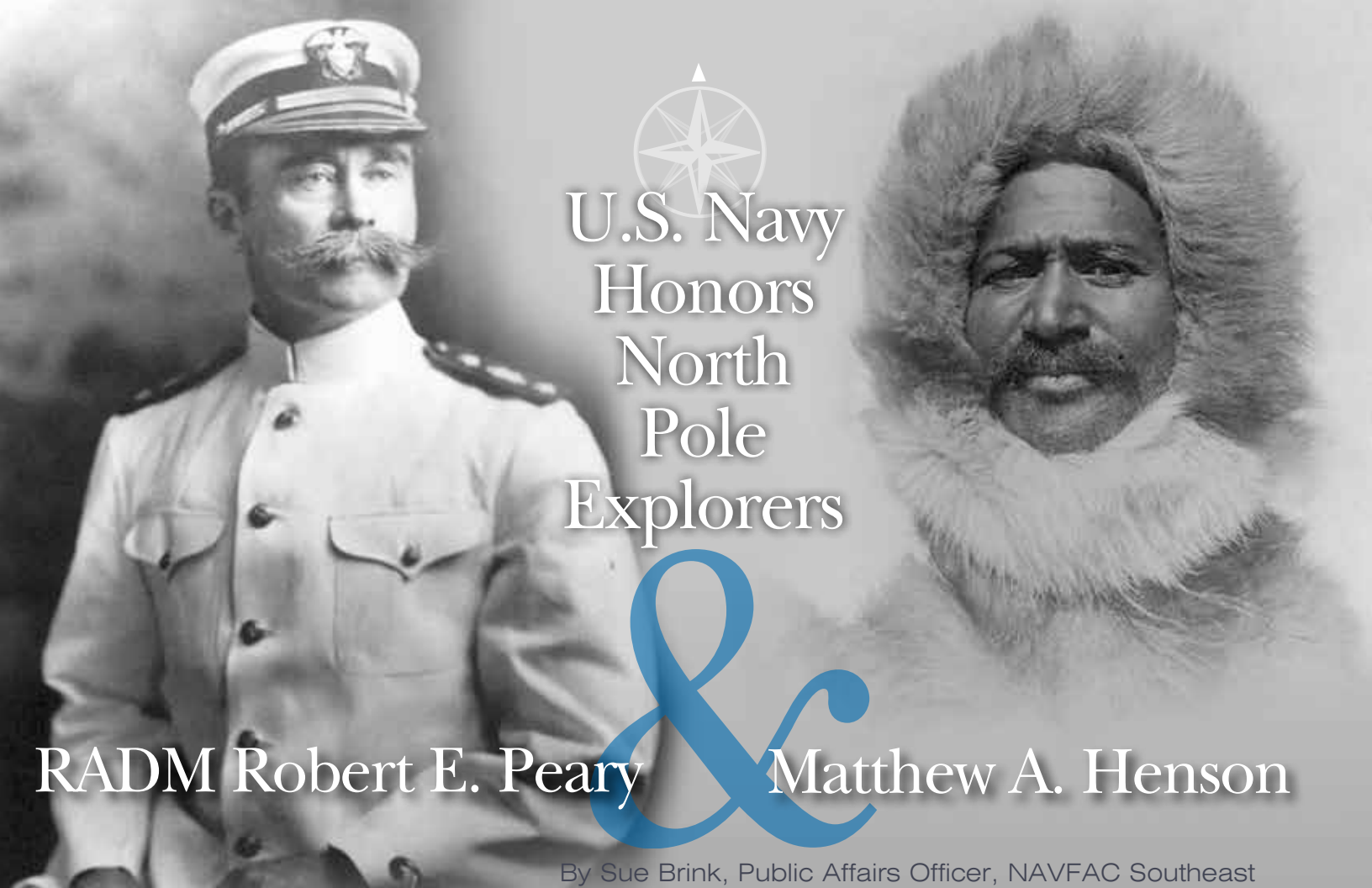
While construction of such a large bridge would have been difficult under normal circumstances, the Seabees were required to work in a remote area in South Vietnam known to contain large concentrations of enemy forces and still completed the project in only five months.

During the bitter struggle of the Tet Offensive in February 1968, the Seabees built and fought in direct support of the Marine Corps and Army. The NCF reached its peak shortly after Tet during which there were more than 11,000 Seabees serving in South Vietnam. Although Seabees continued to labor in the Northern provinces after Tet, the changing priorities of the war began to demand more of their construction skills in the southern Mekong Delta. In 1969, Seabees built a string of coastal bases and radar sites allowing the Vietnamese navy to completely take over surveillance of "brown water" warfare.

With the de-escalation of U.S. activity in Southeast Asia underway, Seabee strength was once again reduced. By September 1970, NMCBs were down to the planned post-Vietnam level of 10 full-sized battalions from the war peak total of 20 units. By the end of 1971, most Seabees were employed outside Southeast Asia and had returned to a more regular peacetime rotational deployment schedule.

Sources: "History of the Seabees," NAVFAC Historian's Office (1997), U.S. Navy Seabee Archive, U.S. Navy Seabee Museum, Port Hueneme, Calif., Naval History and Heritage Command and Terry Lukanic, MCB 74 Quang Tri, RVN '69-'70. Photos courtesy of Fabio "Fred" Allodoli, Joseph Marone (dec.), Tom Marone and Hugh "Mack" McCauley.





# U.S. Navy Honors North Pole Explorers

## RADM Robert E. Peary & Matthew A. Henson

By Sue Brink, Public Affairs Officer, NAVFAC Southeast

For the first time, members of two families attended an event on April 6 honoring two men who made an important discovery 100 years ago. To commemorate the discovery of the North Pole by RADM Robert E. Peary, a U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps officer, and Matthew A. Henson, an explorer and Maryland native, the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) held a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va.

Guest speakers at the ceremony included RADM Greg Shear, commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, and Chief of Engineers; CDR Edward Peary Stafford (Ret.), RADM Peary's grandson; and Gilbert Grosvenor, chairman, National Geographic Society Board of Trustees. Diane Savoy, great grandniece of Matthew Henson, and Robert E. Peary III, grandson of Peary, participated in the ceremony by laying wreaths at both gravesites.

"It is a great day and an honor to host this ceremony on such

hallowed grounds," said RADM Shear. "It is a fascinating story of two pioneers, one a naval officer and one a local man, who struck up a friendship here in Washington, D.C., both from very different walks of life, but who shared a common passion for adventure and exploration."

Peary accomplished what others centuries before dreamed of, doing so without modern technology or transportation. He believed that those who lived off the land (the Inuits) were survivors and he learned from them which ultimately made Peary successful, according to Stafford.

Stafford spoke highly of Mathew Henson citing that "he was an indispensable assistant on that exploration as he had been on four previous." Peary and Henson were a great team that followed their ambitions to continue at all costs until they achieved their goal – the North Pole.

"Their enthusiasm to continue after seven disappointed attempts is considered the greatest exploration achievement of all times," said Grosvenor, of their dedication and commitment as explorers.



**Family members of the two men who discovered the North Pole, along with NAVFAC and Civil Engineer Corps personnel, and the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard honor the discovery on its 100th anniversary in a wreath-laying ceremony at their gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., April 6.**

U.S. Navy photo by Mason Lowery



## CDR Duane G. Wolfe, CEC, Killed in Iraq

By U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs Office, Gulf Region Division

U.S. Navy photo



Coalition Forces, State Department representatives and Iraqis gathered together May 28 at an afternoon memorial in Baghdad's International Zone honoring the life and service of CDR Duane G. Wolfe, CEC. CDR Wolfe was among three people killed by a roadside bomb in Fallujah, Iraq, May 25.

Wolfe was the officer in charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division's (GRD's) Al Anbar Area Office. At the time of his death, Wolfe was conducting site visits at construction projects in the Fallujah area. The team he led is responsible for overseeing nearly \$300 million in planned and ongoing construction projects, many of which are providing essential services to the Iraqi people.

In his remarks during the service, Maj. Gen. Michael R. Eyre, GRD's commanding general, remembered CDR Wolfe

as a man who served his nation with honor and devotion.

"Commander Wolfe represented the very best of our American military forces," Maj. Gen. Eyre said. "He was a Navy Reserve officer who loved his country and he knew that the work he and his team at the Al Anbar Area Office were accomplishing was making a difference for the citizens of Iraq. "As we mourn the loss of our teammate, we also mourn the loss of a loving husband and father. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family back home," Eyre said.

Wolfe resided in Los Osos, Calif. He began his military career with the Navy in 1972 and served on active duty for five years. In 1978, he joined the Navy Reserves, and served in various reserve units attached to Naval Operational Support Center, Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme, Calif. In addition to his military service, he was an employee for the Department of the Air Force, working at Vandenberg Air Force Base as the civilian deputy commander of the 30<sup>th</sup> Space Wing Mission Support Group.



*Originally created by President George Washington, the Purple Heart is awarded to U.S. service members wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action. Fifteen Seabees and two CEC officers have been killed since the start of the current conflicts.*

**Service members in Baghdad, Iraq, render military honors to CDR Duane G. Wolfe, CEC, during a memorial ceremony held in the International Zone, May 28. CDR Wolfe was killed May 25 in Fallujah when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device.**

USACE photo courtesy of F.T. Eyre





## Seabees Design and Construct Boat Ramp for Riverines in Al Asad

By ENS Donald Bowen, NMCB 24



Riverines from RIVRON ONE Detachment 1 test a boat ramp, constructed by NMCB 24, with a Small Unit River Craft (SURC) at Lake Thar Thar, Iraq, April 22.

Photo by EOCS Jerry Carter II

Navy Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 24, completed design and construction of a boat ramp at Lake Thar Thar, Iraq, in May for RIVRON ONE Detachment 1, assigned to Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC).

NECC's Riverine squadrons are considered members of the "brown-water" Navy, patrolling inland waters versus the vast open oceans. RIVRON ONE Detachment 1's main tasking is to assist coalition forces with securing the local Thar Thar Lake Dam and provide local Iraqi police with patrol boat training.

After a drought caused Lake Thar Thar to recede, leaving only mud at the shoreline, NMCB 24 built a boat ramp so that launch of the high-speed Small Unit River Craft (SURC) used by the riverine unit would not be hindered. The SURC, used to patrol Lake Thar Thar, is a heavy-water craft, even without the added gear and personnel. Mud, low-water levels, boat size and weight are all of the factors that challenge RIVRON ONE. Following site assessment and security establishment, NMCB 24's team began construction on a dirt road, turnaround area and the actual boat ramp.

## NMCB 15 Modifies Culverts to Deny Insurgents

CMCN Leo Pluhar, NMCB 15, grinds field modifications to a 36-inch steel grating late last year in Fallujah, Iraq. The work, part of the Culvert Denial Program, is designed to deny insurgents from placing Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) inside drainage culverts along Main Supply Routes in Iraq.

Photo by EO2 Darren Hagen



## Deputy Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Visits Al Anbar

By CM2 Nicole Harmon, NMCB 24



**N**aval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 24 welcomed RADM T.C. Cropper, deputy commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, to Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, April 20.

During the visit, NMCB 24 members briefed RADM Cropper on current and future construction projects, including road assessments, camp maintenance and an extensive supply inventory. Cropper also toured the Alfa Company work spaces and Battalion Aid Station of Camp RJ, speaking with several Seabees.

**RADM T.C. Cropper (right), deputy commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, shakes hands with CM2 Patrick Tibai, NMCB 24, while meeting with Seabees at the battalion's Alfa Shop, Al Asad Air Base Iraq, in April.**

Photo by CM2 Nicole Harmon

## Father and Son Seabees Reunite in Kuwait

By MC1 Kelli Roesch, Media Transition Team, Kuwait

**B**uilder Constructionman Eric Kraninger, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11, shrugs and smiles through the constant teasing by his fellow Seabees. Everyone at Kuwait's Camp Moreell knows that his father is the highest ranking enlisted leader of NMCB 5 – Command Master Chief Mark E. Kraninger. “With a name like Kraninger, people make the connection and if they don’t, they ask,” said CMDCM Kraninger.

Although the Kraningers are in different battalions and stationed on opposite sides of the country, they briefly crossed paths at Camp Moreell in the Kuwaiti desert in March. While spending this past Christmas together, the Kraningers discovered they were both being deployed. However, they had no idea they would be in the same camp at the same time.

Master Chief Kraninger was touring the camp with the battalion commanding officer when he saw his son. Not missing a beat, the tough Seabee master chief demanded to know, “Where’s your SCWS (Seabee Combat Warfare Specialist) pin?” Father and son shook hands while the young Seabee tried to give the master chief a good explanation as to why he had not earned the pin yet.

Construction is obviously in the Kraninger’s blood. BUCN Kraninger spent a few summers working for his grandfather, a general contractor in Nora Springs, Iowa. Still, the idea of becoming a Seabee wasn’t originally part of his plan. “At first I was never going to join the military, but about halfway through my senior

year of high school I started to think about it,” he said.

True to form, Master Chief Kraninger let his son make his own decision. “Eric knew a lot of what I went through,” he said. “I had a few other Seabees sit down with him and [share] their perspectives.” Ultimately, Eric joined the Navy as a builder. As a surprise during “A” school graduation, Master Chief Kraninger took off the Navy-issued ball cap and replaced it with his Navy cover.

BUCN Kraninger then joined his new Seabee shipmates in Gulfport, Miss.

CMDCM Kraninger’s advice to his son has been simple from the beginning. “Keep yourself squared away and know your job.” BUCN Kraninger remembers another piece of advice – “My dad jokingly said, ‘If you get in trouble, I don’t know you!’”

Master Chief Kraninger keeps a respectful distance to let his son learn to deal with challenges like any other Seabee. “I try to keep a hands-off approach,” he said. “I stay out of his business. We’re professional,

so we do our jobs; but when we’re off duty we talk about things.”

When the teasing and taunts subside from his fellow Seabees, and the family reunion comes to an end, BUCN Kraninger realizes his father will soon transfer to Afghanistan for a six-month tour. As Master Chief Kraninger leaves Camp Moreell, BUCN Kraninger transitions back to being another young Seabee far away from home – yet he realizes how lucky he is to have seen his dad half a world away.



**CMDM Mark E. Kraninger (left), NMCB 5, and BUCN Eric E. Kraninger, NMCB 11, share a laugh before the master chief departed for Afghanistan. The Kraningers had the opportunity to spend a little quality father-son time together in March prior to NMCB 5's deployment.**

Photo by MC3 Jorge Saucedo



## 25<sup>th</sup> NCR Special Deliveries Help Local Afghans

By MC2 Dale Miller, 25<sup>th</sup> NCR Public Affairs

As local nationals arrived at Kandahar Airfield (KAF), Afghanistan, to deliver cargo to other Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) in April, they waited in a holding area until their escort arrived.

"I think it plays a big role in their well-being because they have nothing, and this offers them a job opportunity that normally wouldn't be available in this country," said Steelworker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class James Mendryga, 25<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (NCR).

SW2 Mendryga searched the crowd looking for his driver to start the logistics process, and asked if anyone had papers authorized to transfer cargo. He found two drivers, Abdul and Aziz, with papers to transport lumber to other FOBs in Afghanistan.

At first, there was a language barrier between Mendryga and the two locals, but

they worked out their differences and proceeded to a checkpoint where all paperwork was verified. The Afghan nationals were then escorted to their trucks.

The trucks were located in the Class IV Yard where building materials are stored. Abdul and Aziz prepared their trailers to transport the lumber. While waiting for the lumber, Abdul shared with Mendryga how the Taliban had tried to steal the loads he delivered, and pointed out the bullet hole in the windshield of his truck.

**"The most common threats to the cargo we ship by ground are the Taliban."**

— SW2 James Mendryga, 25<sup>th</sup> NCR

Abdul then described how he sometimes had to bribe the Taliban so he could deliver the goods safely to the FOBs. He shared that other drivers have died and have been wounded during the transport; he also said that four of these men have died in his own truck.

"In my experience, the local nationals are like any others who work for a living, and generally have a positive attitude toward Americans," said Mendryga.

Finally Abdul and Aziz's cargo was loaded. "We normally use air support for the movement of cargo, but driving is the best means of delivery," he said. "We hire them [local nationals] for ground deliveries because they speak the language, and know the routes that take the least amount of time. They are also able to blend in with the locals, causing less danger for our troops."

## NMCB 11 Pushes Outside the Wire in Afghanistan

By BU3 Amy Higgins, NMCB 11 Public Affairs

The Seabees from NMCB 11 Air Detachment Afghanistan pushed outside the wire to support U.S. Army Special Forces by making improvements to the new staging compound at Camp Lindsay and Camp Simmons, earlier this spring.

The battalion's detachment is deployed to Kandahar Air Field (KAF), but the work at the Special Forces camp was conducted outside the air field perimeter. Given the small window allotted for construction since Army Special Forces had to occupy the camp immediately, the Seabees were tasked to work with Afghani local national contractors to create a functional sanitary sewer system, in addition to other improvements, in six days.

The Seabee crew of five consisted of three electricians and two utilitiesmen, later augmented with two welders. Prior to the move-in date, a multitude of tasks had to be completed. One of the tasks required the utilitiesmen to tap into the main sewage discharge line from a newly constructed building and connect it to an existing lift station. The local contractors trenched nearly 300 yards in order for the Seabees to install the four-inch PVC pipe. Electricians placed pre-cast concrete pads, installed two 100-KVA generators and wired two B-huts with lights, outlets and HVAC units. They also installed a 400-amp distribution panel, a manual transfer switch and 150 yards of direct burial cable in order to establish the power distribution system for the camp. The welders fabricated and installed a steel access gate into an existing HESCO barrier wall to allow access between both camps.

All crew members agreed they gained a lot of in-rate knowledge. "It was a great experience to go help fellow soldiers in need," said Construction Electrician 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Lucas Vanwhy, NMCB 11.



Seabees from NMCB 11 board a military transport helicopter to move forward to several locations and build a Special Forces Camp in an undisclosed location in Afghanistan, earlier this spring.

Photo by LT Richard L. Li

## New Communications Gear Keeps Seabees Connected

By Daryl C. Smith, Public Affairs Officer, 1NCD

Seabee battalions will now have a new communications system when they deploy to locations such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The ruggedized deployable satellite communication (RDSAT) system allows classified and unclassified e-mail, phone and video teleconference communication for Seabee battalions, even in remote locations.

"This is a huge achievement," said LCDR Avonna Ramsey, information technologies officer for First Naval Construction Division (1NCD). "To be self-sufficient is really a big deal for us."

Previously, Seabee units had to rely on other units' communications systems while in remote areas. Relying on other units makes Seabees risk having no communications if the other units redeploy elsewhere, Ramsey explained.

Mirroring the system used by the U.S. Marine Corps, the new systems have been approved for the P-25 Table of Allowance for Seabee battalions. There are currently four RDSATs in the Naval Construction Force inventory, with a total of 16 systems planned. The cost for all 16 units is approximately \$30 million.

Although the requirement for the RDSATs had been identified nearly five years ago, and plans had been underway to gain approval to purchase them, the redeployment of Seabee battalions to Afghanistan early this year added a special urgency to the request. The First Naval Construction Regiment (1NCR) determined in late December 2008 that there was no network connectivity where the Seabees would be located, so it was necessary



**IT1 Alan Decker, NMCB 7, inserts a cord into the transmitter dish of a Ruggedized Deployable Satellite Communications (RDSAT) system, while performing routine maintenance checks in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Feb. 17.**

Photo by MC2 Michael B. Lavender

for them to have their own system. The first unit was packaged and shipped by mid-February 2009, only six weeks after the request was received.

Getting the first unit delivered, set up and operational in Afghanistan was a landmark achievement for the Seabees, and required teamwork and coordination.

The unit was packaged and shipped by the 22NCR and 1NCD, and shipped off to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 in Afghanistan by civilians including John Harrington, Scott Chauncey and Robert Diaz. Once in country, it was set up at the Seabee camp by ITC Rodney Sowers, ETC Shane Stanford and IT2 Christopher Traver. "While we were working 20-hour days in Afghanistan, they were working the same 20 hours here in Gulfport [Miss.] to assist us in completing the mission," ITC Sowers said of his civilian counterparts.

"It's a big step forward for us," said LT Michael Janssen, NMCB 7's communications officer. "The RDSAT provides us the ability to maintain our own information infrastructure,

no matter where we go."

Key to the system are two Expeditionary Network Operations Centers (ENOCs), one in Gulfport, Miss., and the other in Port Hueneme, Calif. Signals from the RDSAT are bounced off a satellite and sent through the Navy network to one of the ENOCs.

Two six-week courses are currently provided to train personnel in operating the new system, and more are planned for the future.

## 'Bees Shift from Green to Tan Hardhat

By Daryl C. Smith, Public Affairs Officer, 1NCD

After years of wearing the traditional green hardhat, Navy Seabees are now shifting to a tan hardhat for E6 and below. The new hardhat reflects light better than before and since it remains cooler, tests have shown it remains in better condition and provides better head protection.

The new hardhat also blends better with the desert camouflage uniform, along with the tan belt and boots, and is currently being distributed to the entire Naval Construction Force.

(Right) NMCB 3, Afghanistan, 2008

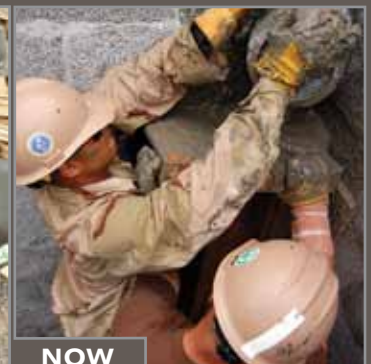
Photo by MC2 Eli J. Medellin

(Far right) NMCB 11, Moroni, Comoros, 2009

Photo by MC2 Erick S. Holmes



THEN



NOW



## NCBC Gulfport Gym Facility Sustains Damage in Strong Winds



A severe storm blew through South Mississippi on April 2, sending strong winds, tornados, rain and hail through the area. After the roof of the Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport fitness facility blew off during the storm (above), the 20<sup>th</sup> Seabee Readiness Group (SRG) was on hand to remove debris (below).

Photos by MC1(SW) Terry Spain





## UCT 1 Assists in Recovery Following Haiti School Collapse

By MCC(SCW) Jeffrey J. Pierce, 22<sup>nd</sup> NCR Public Affairs

As UCT 1 performed underwater assessments during SOUTHCOM's disaster relief efforts following hurricanes in Haiti, a children's school collapsed in Port-au-Prince. Six Seabees were soon on their way to assist in recovery efforts at the school late last year.

According to Chief Construction Electrician Dennis Bergman, UCT 1, Lt. Col. Andy Woolwine, UCT 1's liaison officer from U.S. Southern Command, received a call from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) asking for help in recovery efforts at the school.

"Once it was clear that there was a situation that may benefit from our dive team members who were already in country, we quickly discussed it and decided we would operate at whatever capacity our chain of command would allow," said Hospital Corpsman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael C. Cleaves.

The UCT 1 team soon made it near the scene, the Seabees made some initial assessments and then performed some identification work for emergency operations.

According to HM1 Cleaves, the team coordinated communication with locals through their interpreter to maintain scene integrity, as well as helping Haitian firefighters set the pipe shores. Once they were in place on two slabs identified as most threatening, the team worked its way to the back of the collapsed school.

"We carefully made our way up over the rubble, clearing any loose debris with shovels and listening for anything that could be a potential trapped victim," Cleaves said. "It was decided that for the time-being we would clear what debris and rubble we safely could and await the search and rescue (SAR) dogs that would arrive shortly."

During the early morning hours a void

was found with four survivors in it, and they were quickly whisked away to receive medical attention.

"We returned the next morning to continue our efforts in whatever capacity we could offer," Cleaves said. "Most of the day, we were employed in a consultant capacity and as safety observers to the indigenous work crews."

"Our personnel were deployed to Haiti...as part of SOUTHCOM's [hurricane] disaster relief efforts," LCDR Greg Miller, commanding officer, UCT 1, said. "When the school collapsed in Port-au-Prince, they were immediately redirected to assist with the search and recovery efforts."

"I am proud of each individual's professionalism as [the team] quickly shifted efforts to respond to this tragedy," he added, "[as well as] their demonstration of the Seabee 'Can Do' spirit of UCT 1."

**When a children's school collapsed in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, six members of UCT 1 took leave from performing underwater assessments following hurricanes late last year and assisted in recovery efforts. The Seabees' help was requested by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).**

Photo by UCT 1





# 30<sup>th</sup> NCR Seabees Provide Command and Control for Balikatan '09

By MCC(FMF/SW/AW) Shane Montgomery, Public Affairs Officer, Pacific Fleet Seabees



**U.S. Navy Seabees and Marines, along with Philippine Navy Seabees, work together to raise and secure a supporting beam for a roof on a new high school in Sorsogon, Republic of the Philippines, April 14.**

USMC photo by Cpl. Heather Golden

When the Third Marine Expeditionary Force was looking for a unit to conduct command and control of Civil Military Operations (CMO) for Balikatan '09 (BK 09) in the Bicol region of the Philippines, it came to the Seabees of the 30<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (30NCR), who have extensive experience with joint military operations in expeditionary environments. Commanded by CAPT Kelly Schmader, the regiment received the tasking for Balikatan in December and immediately began planning.

Balikatan 2009 is a bilateral humanitarian assistance and training activity that promotes unity and readiness between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States.

After command and control missions in Iraq in 2005 and 2007, as well as a pending deployment to Afghanistan later this year, 30NCR is experienced in managing tasks for units in the Marine Corps and Army; however, the new challenge during BK 09 would be to conduct the same command and control for CMO projects, while at the same time working bilaterally with Seabees,

Marines and Army forces of the Philippines.

"The task organization developed for command and control of CMO projects has been extremely effective," said LCDR Tres Meek, Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force (JCMOTF) operations officer. "Leveraging the capabilities of civil affairs, psychological operations, counter intelligence and combat camera, we have been able to positively influence the operational environment by our conduct, words and projects. The Marine air wing has also been critical to mission success by moving people and equipment wherever it is needed in the region. All of these things have given us the opportunity to work shoulder to shoulder with our AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] counterparts and at the same time provide critical engineering and medical needs to the people of the Bicol region."

"Shoulder to shoulder," the Tagalog meaning for "Balikatan," has been embraced by both members of the U.S. and Philippine armed forces conducting CMO operations in this region. The task force is divided into two types (Continued on following page)

“...the number of people receiving clean water, new schools and better roads can't be counted because it will reach across generations.”

– LCDR Tres Meek, operations officer, Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force

(Continued from previous page) of CMO projects: Engineering Civil Action Projects (ENCAPS) and Medical Civil Action Projects (MEDCAPS).

"We are conducting six ENCAPS and 16 MEDCAPS in the Bicol region," said LCDR Meek. "With the MEDCAPs, we will impact about 15,000 Filipinos; once the ENCAPS are complete the number of people receiving clean water, new schools and better roads can't be counted because it will reach across generations."

Both Seabee and Marine units worked with their Filipino counterparts in three provinces of the Bicol region: Sorsogon, Albay and Masbate. In Sorsogon province, Seabees from Underwater Construction Team (UCT) 2 built a two-room school house, and Marines from Marine Wing Support Squadrons (MWSSs) 171 and 172 refurbished a 1.3-kilometer market road.

In Albay, Marines are also repairing a stretch of road to improve trade and tourism. In the island province of Masbate, Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 constructed two solar-powered water wells, and Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 31 built a two-room school house.

"A big part of what we have to do with command and control of all of these units is the movement," said Chief Equipment Operator A. J. Jensen, movement control manager, JCMOTF. "With four engineering units, three area teams, two MEDCAP teams and a helicopter squadron needing to travel all over the

Bicol region, it's a huge task to coordinate movement."

EOC Jensen describes the movement piece as a team effort that includes support from operations, supply and local transportation officials.

"It's a difficult task, but so important to the overall mission," said Jensen. "I hope when we are done here, we help leave people a little happier and better off than when we arrived."

A large part of the CMO is the MEDCAP portion of the exercise, which required a tremendous amount of command and control coordination.

"We just have to take it a day at a time," said Chief Engineering Aide Josemaria Collado, watch officer, JCMOTF. "The hard part is always the planning, but it's rewarding to see how the mission unfolds and watch the people from the country where I was born get so much help and support."

The JCMOTF and its units have received overwhelming support from the local Philippine people. During an official ceremony, Sorsogon Mayor Maria Teresa Guab-Fragata addressed the Juban community on welcoming the U.S. service members and the progress of the construction.

"We are thankful for the U.S. military bringing their services while here for Balikatan," said Mayor Guab-Fragata. "Due to our economic crisis, this project is a great benefit to the people and the students here."

## NMCB 40 Surveys Construction Support in Sasebo



**EOCA Tiffany Williams, NMCB 40, uses a transit to survey a drainage project at the Hario Shima Ammunition Storage Area, Sasebo, Japan, March 6.**

Photo by MCC(AW/SW) Anthony Briggs Jr.



## AFRICOM Commander Visits Seabees in Comoros

By LT Eric L. Martens, Assistant Officer in Charge, NMCB 4 Detachment Horn of Africa

**G**en. William E. Ward, commander, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), stopped by the Hamramba School Project, Moroni, Comoros, in January to take a look at the work of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 Seabees and meet with troops on the ground.

After arriving on site, Gen. Ward and AFRICOM Command Sgt. Maj. Ripka received a tour from Builder 1<sup>st</sup> Class (SCW) Adam Beardsley, project supervisor.

"[General Ward] was extremely down to earth and easy to talk to," said BU1 Beardsley. "I was tremendously impressed that he took the time to visit our det site."

"With someone of his rank to come and say the work looks good and that we are making a difference really makes you feel good about what you are doing," said Builder 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Lance Shaw, project crew leader.

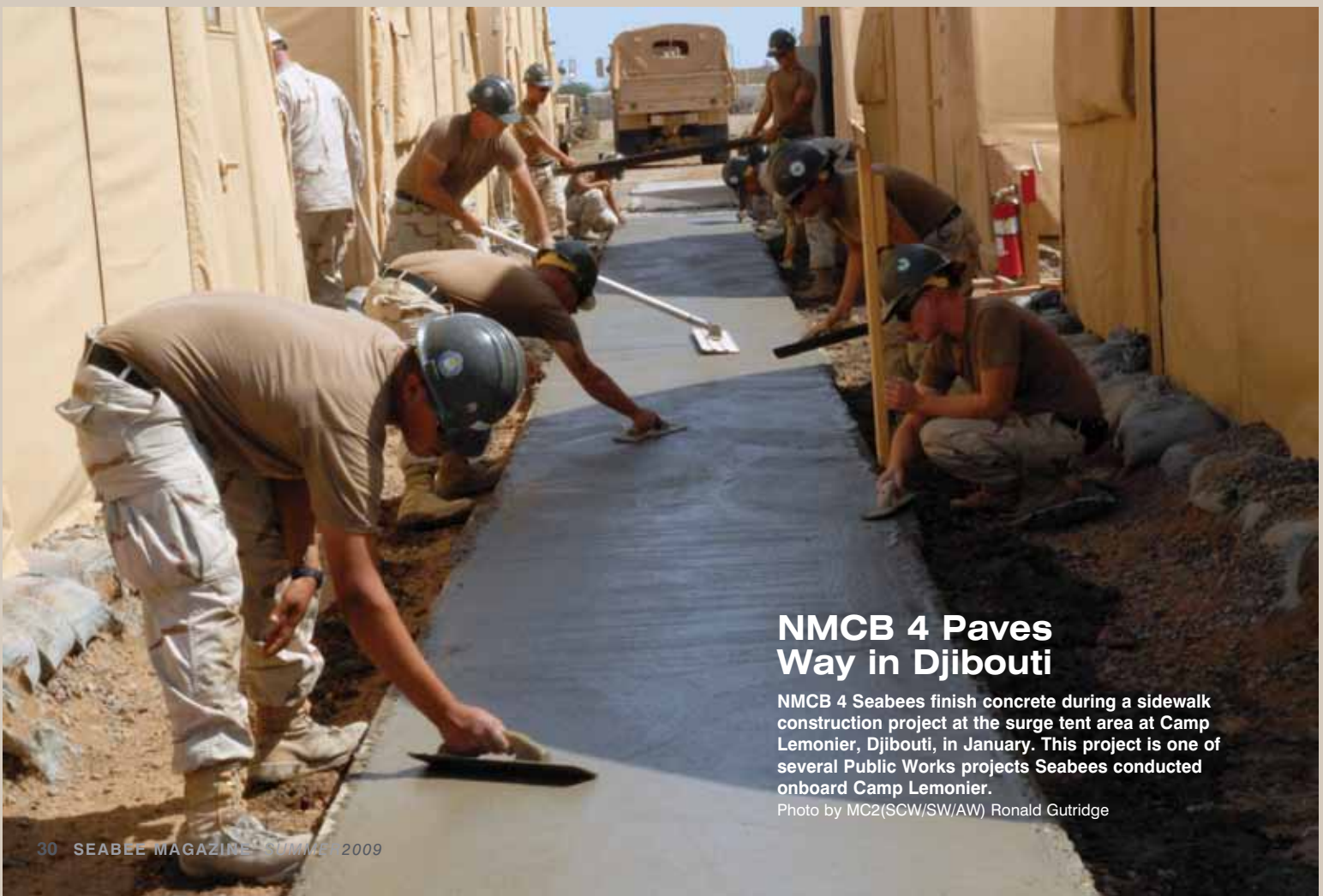
Ward was only scheduled to be onsite for 30 minutes, but ended up spending two hours with the crew. He spent time speaking to each Seabee, shaking hands and sharing jokes. Ward even spent time with the crew laying CMU block for one of the classroom buildings.

Before leaving, Ward personally thanked all the crew members for the outstanding work they have been doing and gave each of them his Command Coin.



**Gen. William E. Ward (right), commander, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), meets Seabees from Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, who built a six-classroom schoolhouse in Moroni, Comoros, Jan. 21. Gen. Ward and U.S. AFRICOM Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Ripka (far right) thanked the Seabees for their work and toured the construction site. "You're here to help in an area that makes the greatest difference for the children," Ward told the Seabees.**

U.S. Navy photo by Kenneth Fidler, AFRICOM



### NMCB 4 Paves Way in Djibouti

NMCB 4 Seabees finish concrete during a sidewalk construction project at the surge tent area at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, in January. This project is one of several Public Works projects Seabees conducted onboard Camp Lemonnier.

Photo by MC2(SCW/SW/AW) Ronald Gutridge





## NMCB 1 Takes Fighting Position for *Winter Talon*

BU3 Brian Williams (left) and BUCN David Harris, NMCB 1, keep watch of the camp perimeter from a concealed fighting position, Camp Shelby, Miss. in March. More than 200 Seabees, most new to the battalion, participated in Operation *Winter Talon*, a field exercise which tests their combat and contingency construction capabilities in a field environment.

Photo by MC1(SCW) Demetrius Kennon

## NMCB 3, UCT 1 Bridge the Gap

By ENS Joshua A. Senecal, NMCB 3

Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 3 and Underwater Construction Team (UCT) 1 completed “Bailey Bridge Construction and Maintenance,” a course taught by the 31<sup>st</sup> Seabee Readiness Group (SRG), Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC), Calif., Jan. 5.

The course included classroom and field instruction, as well as a final exam. Many of the participants were members of NMCB 3’s Bridge Detachment.

“A few individuals had never put a bridge together; it was great experience for everyone,” said Builder 1<sup>st</sup> Class (SCW) Gabe Nuejahr, one of four bridge crew leaders. “Many of the people in my team [were] from different companies, and this was our first opportunity to work together. The time spent building the bridge was a good time for me to see my team in action.”

Though it is constructed without special tools, the Bailey bridge can be configured to suit just about any requirement, and is erected with nothing more than the hard work and sweat of the Seabees. The bridge has more sea time and miles spanned than any other item used by the Naval Construction Force.

From 1944 to present day, the Seabees have used the Bailey bridge as a staple of field construction. While the Mabey Johnson bridge and medium girder bridge are becoming the standard, the Bailey bridge has proven to be a quick and effective answer for “bridging” a gap.

BU2 Christopher Farmer (left) and SW3 Christopher Hightland install a launching nose onto a Bailey bridge panel during a hands-on course at NBVC, Calif., Jan. 11.

Photo by ENS Joshua A. Senecal







## Fleet Mooring Repairs in Guam

BU1(SCW/DV) Daniel Renfroe (left) is assisted by BU2(SCW) Charles Runyon, UCT 2, during diving operations in Guam, March 15. UCT 2 divers repaired fleet moorings throughout Guam providing the Military Sealift Command, Maritime Preposition Force ships and other Naval vessels a place to berth during their visits to Guam.

U.S. Navy photo

## UCT 2 Pushes “Mudpups” to Diving Success

By MCSN Ernesto Hernandez Fonte

Becoming a Seabee diver requires rigorous training, as well as dedication. At a minimum, the diver candidate must complete 130 days of Basic Underwater Construction School training. To help candidates succeed, Seabees from Underwater Construction Team (UCT) 2 created an apprenticeship called the “Mudpup Program.”

Through the program and with parent command approval, Seabees interested in becoming Navy divers are temporarily assigned to UCT 2 and train until detaching for Basic Underwater Construction School.

“The next step before dive school is an interview with the UCT Master Diver,” said Engineering Aide 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Khiaro Promise, a Seabee enrolled as a Mudpup. “I’m nervous, but I know I want to be a diver.”

According to EA3 Promise, he knew he wanted to be a diver when he first saw the UCT dive in the Delta Basin. He went on to deploy with UCT 2 to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where he saw the unit complete diving operations.

“Basically they’ve adopted me,” said Promise. “They take turns and help train me, both physically and mentally.”

Four days a week he and other mudpups exercise with UCT Seabees.

“Our typical plan is to prepare all of our Mudpups physically and mentally for dive school,” said Chief Engineering Aide (SCW/DV) Blair Mercado. “That includes plenty of P.T. [physical training] and also some instruction in the diving basics which they will cover in more detail at dive school.”

“Besides working out with me they also help me study the dive manual,” said Promise. “It’s nice to have a command full of experts on the subject behind you. The first-hand experiences and stories they bring to the topic make it much more interesting to learn.”

## UCT 2 Trades Skills and Good

Seabees from Underwater Construction Team (UCT) 2 trained with Korean divers in Exercise Foal Eagle 2009, Chinhae, Korea, in March.

UCT 2 trained alongside divers from the Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy’s Ship Salvage Unit (SSU). With the opportunity to teach each other, both groups traded skills on diving practices, underwater demolition and construction.

The Korean SSU divers historically have performed underwater ship husbandry, submarine rescue, clearing of harbor debris and sunken wreckage, saturation diving and other missions similar to those of UCT 2.

“We have come here to familiarize SSU divers with the requirements of performing underwater and waterfront engineering, battle damage assessment, inspections and repairs,” said Chief Warrant Officer Frank Iusi, operations officer, UCT 2.

## REMINDER



If you haven’t already, NOW is a good time to start studying for September advancement exams. For more information, see your command career counselor. Can Do!

(Above) NMCB 40 Seabees, Navy-wide Advancement Exam, Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, March 12. Photo by MCC(AW/SW) Anthony Briggs Jr.



**EA3 Khiaro Promise's nerves and body are tested in a recompression chamber in Port Hueneme, Calif., in July. The recompression chamber tests if prospective dive school students are able to withstand the pressures of diving. Sitting next to Promise is a UCT 2 diver who checks on his condition.**

Photo by MCSN Ernesto Hernandez Fonte

Becoming a UCT diver is a path he set to meet his goals when he joined the Navy.

"I joined for travel and education," Promise said. "The UCT offers a great chance to travel all over the world. Last year, they dove in the Arctic and completed missions throughout Southeast Asia and even built schools in the Philippines."

"[UCT divers] are the best at what they do," said Promise. "I want to be a part of the UCT family and join the diver community."



## NMCB 4 Hosts Philippine Commodore at NBVC

**CM1(SCW) John Ledford (top right), NMCB 4, explains the purpose of a fighting position to Commodore Robert Noblefranca, commander, Naval Construction Brigade, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Philippines, during the battalion's Command Post Exercise, April 28. Commodore Noblefranca visited Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC), Calif., to observe operations of the U.S. Seabees.**

Photo by MC2(SCW/SW/AW) Ronald Gutridge

## Spirits with ROK Divers

By UCT 2 Public Affairs

Several Korean divers are sent to Panama City, Fla., to the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC) to learn diving according to the U.S. Navy Diving Manual.

"There are differences in how they do things as well," said Construction Electrician 3<sup>rd</sup> Class (DV) Daniel Lehne. "Their technique for cutting through steel plating in an underwater environment uses equipment that is more compact compared to ours and cuts faster. There is a lot of opportunity to share and cross train here."

The exercise was not all work. "In a short time frame, we were able to build some solid relationships that will be invaluable in future endeavors," said Chief Equipment Operator (SCW/DV) Emory Cole. "This was a great opportunity and opens the doors to much more training in future exercises and interoperability."





EOCN Kenyon Clark (left) and BUCN Justin Lieder, NMCB 3, practice techniques from the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program in February. While hand-to-hand combat training is not part of the Naval Construction Force's contingency construction mission, the program's discipline and confidence it instills helps the Seabees in the long run.

Photo by CMCN Martina E. Goad

## Martial Arts Builds Confidence and Discipline

Submitted by CMCN Martina Goad, NMCB 3

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Three (NMCB) 3 Seabees enrolled in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) received their first belt at Naval Base Ventura County, Calif., Feb. 12. The belt indicates basic comprehension of mental, physical and character discipline, and an understanding of fighting techniques.

The martial arts program, founded by Gen. James L. Jones, 32<sup>nd</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps, provides the tools needed to conduct military operations in urban terrain. The program is committed to train those willing to learn hand-to-

hand combat, morale, teamwork and the Marine "Warrior Ethos."

"MCMAP is not required by the Naval Construction Force," said Gunnery Sgt. Jose Jaquez, NMCB 3's Marine Advisor. "However, the discipline and confidence it instills helps these Seabees in the longrun."

"Seabees face many of the same challenges Marines face," said Gunnery Sgt. Jaquez. "They are our brothers,

“Knowing that I have an added skill to help keep a situation under control gives me confidence that I can help protect my team.”

—BUC Justin Lieder, NMCB 3

and you can say with confidence that if Marine troops are there the Seabee troops are right behind them.”

“What I have learned has gone beyond my expectations,” said Equipment Operator Constructionman Kenyon Clark, the first NMCB 3 Seabee to earn the MCMAP Tan Belt. For Clark, being the first person to earn a belt is a measurement of pride.

“I chose to attend this training for practical knowledge,” said Builder Constructionman Justin Lieder. “Knowing that I have an added skill to help keep a situation under control gives me confidence that I can help protect my team.”

## Seabee “Can Do” Spirit Showcased on TV Show

By MC2 John Hulle, NMCB 74

Seabees from Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss., recently starred in a popular television show, as Leopard Films, a production company contracted by the Do It Yourself (DIY) Network, began filming a one-hour special about Seabees titled, “Combat Construction: Seabees, They Build, They Fight.”

“We do a show called ‘Man Caves’ for the DIY network,” said Julian Locke, producer for Leopard Films. “We were in Kuwait doing a man cave, or a troop cave – basically transforming a USO for the troops at Camp Virginia – we met the Seabees from NMCB 74 and they dug us out of a hole. We could have never completed the project without them.”

“We were so impressed with the way they worked,” Locke continued, “we figured they were a show [unto] themselves.”

The crew visited NMCB 74 at Camp Shelby Joint Training Facility, Miss., in March, as the battalion conducted its field training exercise in preparation for deployment.

“It was a little weird to have the film crew here at first,” said Builder 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Joseph Biccum. “But after a few days the television crew was able to earn the Seabees’ trust. They weren’t afraid to get dirty.”

After a while in the field, the film crew was happy to return to Gulfport and observe how Seabees learn. They visited the Naval Construction Training Center (NCTC) and met the newest batch of Seabee recruits. Josh Temple, the show’s host, also tried his hand at driving large earthmoving equipment, climbing a utility pole and more. “We are vicariously living through the Seabees,” said Temple.

After NCTC, the team visited the Expeditionary Combat Skills School and learned how Seabees defend themselves in any environment.

When asked about his visit with the Seabees, Temple replied, “The more I read [about the Seabees], the more respect I have, and honestly, it’s a great thing to be doing this [filming] because I know there are people out there who don’t know that Seabees exist.”

“We are trying to show that there is more to the Navy than sailing around on ships,” said Locke. “[The Navy] has this unit – the Seabees – that can go anywhere around the world and help people.”

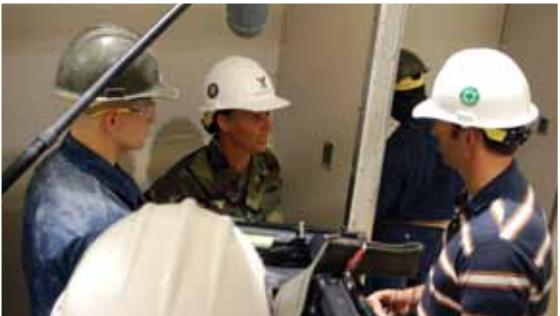
The show is scheduled to air on the DIY Channel this fall.



Josh Temple (center), the host for a one-hour special titled, "Combat Construction. Seabees: They Build, They Fight," speaks with an NMCB 3 Seabee during filming in March.



Crew from Leopard Films shoots the raising of a timber tower by NMCB 74 at Camp Shelby, Miss., during its Field Training Exercise, March 23.



BU2 Christine McClure (center), an instructor at Naval Construction Training Center (NCTC) Gulfport, Miss., speaks with Josh Temple (right) from Leopard Films in March.

U.S. Navy photos by Rob Mims



BU2 Joe Coyle, NMCB 133, dribbles the ball while playing soccer for the U.S. All Armed Forces Team against Canada's Armed Forces Team in the Consel International du Sport Militaire Continental Championship, Dyess Air Force Base, Abilene, Texas, Feb. 22.

U.S. Navy photo

## NMCB 133 'Bee Gets a Kick Out of Soccer

By MCC Ryan Delcore, NMCB 133

**B**uilder Constructionman Joe Coyle, NMCB 133, is no stranger to pushing himself to get the most out of life and his Navy career.

After graduating from the University of Connecticut with a bachelors degree in history and a masters degree in education, BUCN Coyle visited the local recruiting center to learn about what the Navy had to offer. After screening, he was denied entry into most programs due to color blindness and difficulty with depth perception. However, the Seabees were very interested.

Coyle quickly got into the swing of things, attending a field training exercise at the Jungle Warfare Training Center and working at construction sites in Okinawa. While working out at the Camp Marvin Shields gym, he saw a flyer for the All Navy Soccer Team tryouts. He had been playing soccer since the age of three.

"I wanted to do something physical and challenging while serving in the Navy," said Coyle. He submitted a package and wowed the coaches during tryouts; they soon made him team captain.

The team went to Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas, for a tournament where they competed against the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps. The All Navy Team came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and Coyle received a crystal trophy as one of 11 players in the tournament to play for the U.S. All Armed Forces Team. The team took home the bronze medal.

Since returning from deployment and the soccer tournaments, Coyle has been studying for the Builder 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Petty Officer advancement examination and plans to put in an officer package in the future.





## NMCB 1 'Bees Win Two CHINFO Awards

By NAVFAC HQ Public Affairs



The Chief of Naval Information (CHINFO) announced the 2008 Merit Awards for exemplary achievement in internal media and print/broadcast products by Navy commands and individuals. The following Seabees received awards in these categories:

*2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Photojournalism*

**MC1(SCW) Demetrius Kennon, NMCB 1**

*Honorable Mention, News Article*

**MC1(SCW) Chadwick Runge, NMCB 1**

**Congratulations...Can Do!**

Select CHINFO entries are featured above by award-winning photojournalist MC1(SCW) Demetrius Kennon, NMCB 1. MC1(SCW) Chadwick Runge's award-winning news article, "Transition Course Helps Bring Warriors Home," which gave readers an update on the Warrior Transition Program at Camp Moreell, Kuwait, was featured in the Summer 2008 issue of Seabee Magazine.

Photos by MC1(SCW) Demetrius Kennon

### 2009 SEABEE REUNIONS

#### JULY-AUGUST

**JUL 31-AUG 4** Rome, NY

**NMCB 19 CPO Assoc**

*All former members of*

*MCB 19 invited*

Charlie Alexander

845-565-7599

patcharsale@hvc.rr.com

#### SEPTEMBER

**SEPT 3-6** Natchitoches, LA

**56<sup>th</sup> NCB**

Bill Rosevally

985-867-8198

504-231-7474 cell

billrosevally@aol.com

**SEPT 9-12** New London, CT

**NAV/MAG**

**(Cartagena, Spain)**

Augie Vagnini

203-598-0870

aumadi99vagnini@yahoo.com

**SEPT 10-13** Rosemont

(Chicago), IL

**NMCB 7 Annual**

**Reunion**

Alan Nachman

312-810-25665

alan.nac@att.net

**SEPT 10-12** Moline, IL

**62<sup>nd</sup> NCB (WWII)**

Joh Johansen

303-949-3944

**SEPT 10-12** Lincoln City, OR

**MCBs 2, 3, 5, 9, 11**

*All Cubi Point Seabees*

*invited*

Don Luther

503-398-5662

**SEPT 11-13** Elk Rapids, MI

**60<sup>th</sup> NCB (WWII)**

Marie Veliquette

231-264-8329

**SEPT 18-20** Springfield, IL

**63<sup>rd</sup> NCB**

Ginny Connelly Hostetler

217-774-4563

Gh1610@yahoo.com

**SEPT 23-26** Omaha, NE

**3<sup>rd</sup> NCB (WWII)**

Horace Johnson

512-288-2078

512-970-0784 (cell)

**SEPT 25-27** Westport, MA

**21<sup>st</sup> NCR, CBC Davisville, RI**

**CBMU 202 (Korea Era)**

**CBU 408**

**NMCBs 12, 13, 19, 27**

*All Seabees welcome*

Bill Napert Jr.

508-672-2737

bnapert@aol.com

**SEPT 26-27** Pittsburgh, PA

**119<sup>th</sup> NCB**

Adam Belajac

412-373-6283

abelajac119cb@webtv.net

#### OCTOBER

**OCT 1-3** Myrtle Beach, SC

**CBDs 1802, 1804**

**CBMUs 1, 101**

**NMCB 2**

**(Korea Era)**

Scott Williams

770-456-4246

williash@aol.com

**OCT 2-4** Branson, MO

**CBMU 302**

Dave Schill

609-410-5969

dwschill@comcast.net

**OCT 3** Fountain Valley, CA

**NMCB 16**

BUC Al Hegney

909-627-34611

hegneyhouse@hotmail.com

**OCT 4-7** Newport, RI

**33<sup>rd</sup> NCB**

Paula Ogden

401-722-5208

pogden@massbay.edu

**OCT 4-7** Reno, NV

**103<sup>rd</sup> NCB Reunion**

Wayne Heple

805-343-2399

nwheple@yahoo.com

**OCT 8-11** Las Vegas, NV

**NMCB 9**

*All Seabees welcome*

Bobby Fletcher

702-897-66131

ichibanseabee@aol.com

**OCT 9-11** Las Vegas, NV

**NMCB 1 (All Eras)**

Peter Dowd

781-837-0393

mcb1reunion@verizon.net

**OCT 10-16** Gulfport, MS

**72<sup>nd</sup> NCB**

Robert Adams

859-384-8905

silverscreen@fuse.net

**OCT 11-14** Las Vegas, NV

**Seabee Team 0303 &**

**Friends (0301-0306)**

George Fowler

972-874-7308

gefnbkt@aol.com

**OCT 12-16** Gulfport, MS

**All Seabee Reunion**

LT Jon Scott

757-235-2841 cell

jon.scott61@yahoo.com

**OCT 12-16** Gulfport, MS

**107<sup>th</sup> NCB**

Frank Kullmann

201-825-9465

**OCT 12-16** Gulfport, MS

**NSVA National**

**Convention**

W. R. "Bear" Holland

252-975-0834

bearholland@suddenlink.net

**OCT 13-16** Gulfport, MS

**NMCB 62 (Mini**

**Reunion)**

**PWD Edzell, Scotland**

Norm Hahn

715-834-4780

nhahnjr@sbcglobal.net

http://nmcb62alumni.org

**OCT 15-18** Orlando, FL

**NMCB 3**

**(All Eras)**

David A. Schofield

508-255-1583

davesc@verizon.net

**OCT 15-18** Corpus Christi, TX

**11th NCB (WWII)**

**NMCB 11 Association**

Larry Hagler

512-267-8873

mcb11.reunion@earthlink.net

net

**For a complete list of reunions, visit [www.allseabees.com](http://www.allseabees.com) or the Seabee Historical Foundation at [www.seabeehf.org](http://www.seabeehf.org).**

## NMCB 11 Writes a New Chapter...

As Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11 completes its first deployments in 39 years – throughout Africa, Southwest Asia, SOUTHCOM and Europe in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom – four Seabees share their perspectives on being a part of the battalion's newest chapter in its "Can Do" history...

U.S. Navy photos



BU3(SCW/AW) Thomas Turner

My tour with NMCB 11 has been a pretty good story. When I was attending "A" school, I thought about what it would be like to help start a battalion. When I arrived, I found myself surrounded by lots of junior troops. They really didn't know what battalion life was all about or what NMCB 11 was about to become. At the commissioning, it wasn't necessarily the leadership in the battalion that taught me to be a Seabee. The grandfathers and great-grandfathers of Seabees past in MCB 11 founded a tradition, and our leadership is passing those values and virtues on in our great traditions. As the training phase of home-port slowed down, I found out for myself that honor, selflessness, devotion to duty, and the courage to stand through it all is what makes Seabees. Seabees like CM3 Marvin Shields showed us what living by example is all about – which makes my tour in NMCB 11 a true honor.



UT2(SCW) Jeffrey A. Napier

In Fall 2006, I was in Crew Serve class at Little Creek, Va., when my LPO walked in and asked for volunteers. Before she even explained I raised my hand; in no time I was in Gulfport Miss., looking for NMCB 11's quarterdeck. Quickly placed in the Training Department, the people there were ready to hit the ground running, either by volunteering for classes or community service projects. I

had never seen such enthusiasm coming from a battalion and it never stopped. Now, to be four months into deployment and see the same drive for excellence and determination to get the job done is amazing. I am proud to serve with the men and women of NMCB 11.

I feel the commissioning of NMCB 11 is a strong step for the Navy and NCF, proving the high demand for Seabees around the world. [This] makes me feel like NMCB 11 is setting a standard that every battalion in the NCF should strive to obtain.



BU2(SCW)  
Stephanie A. Johnson

The commissioning ceremony day comes to mind when I think about being in NMCB 11. The MCB 11 veterans who came from all over the country had such pride on their faces that you couldn't help but be proud. [We have pride in] what we have accomplished in Gulfport, Miss. – building walking path bridges in Bayou View Park; setting up swing sets at Orange Grove Elementary

School; working on numerous Habitat for Humanity projects; and helping local veterans recover from Hurricane Katrina. Presently, we're building bridges connecting local Ugandan communities.

The growing pains that we all felt as a command were a struggle at times, but we all took away valuable lessons...I have learned a lot about myself, the Seabees and the Navy as a whole in the two years that I have been with NMCB 11. I have learned I have many shortcomings, but I have also learned that I can overcome most of them with a little hard work and determination.



YN1(SW/AW) Marshall Kessler

When my plane left Brussels, Belgium, in March 2007, and touched down in Gulfport, Miss., I didn't know what to expect. From the moment I checked in, I was excited and nervous because I had never been a Plankowner. I jumped on the chance to be on the Command Color Guard because of my previous experience in boot camp and at SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe], Belgium. I love being in front of a crowd of people and hoisting the flag proudly. Getting a chance to strut my stuff with a group of Seabees as Color Guard was a major highlight in my career, especially marching in front of the proud veterans of MCB 11. To see them saluting and shouting happily at us made me walk prouder and sharper. No lie. The day we commissioned was a proud day for me. I wore my leggings and choker a little longer that day and was really proud when I found out that I was in *Seabee Magazine*. I saved that magazine.

*Construimus ★ Batuimus*





CM2 Trent Thunhorst, NMCB 11, shows a group of children their photos on his digital camera in Aromo, Uganda, March 3. NMCB 11 is deployed for the first time since being re-established in 2007, and is tasked to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

Photo by MC2 Erick S. Holmes

